THE MINORITIES IN CEYLON, 1926-1931

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE DONOUGHMORE COMMISSION

by

QUINTUS GODFREY FERNANDO

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ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to shed light on the behaviour of the ethnic, caste and religious minority groups in Ceylon during the five years of investigations, consultations and debates that culminated in the Donoughmore Constitution of 1931; and also to inquire whether communalism - the political form of the minority problem - was actually aggravated during this period.

Based on criteria of ancestral origin, social organisation and religious belief, which are the chief sources of division of society in Ceylon, and, for that matter, in South Asia generally, the study considers the following minorities: the Kandyan Sinhalese, the Tamils, Indians, Muslims (Moors and Malays), Burghers and Europeans as ethnic minorities; all the non-Goyigama and non-Vellala caste groups as caste minorities; and the Christians as a religious minority.

As a preamble to a detailed study of the period under review, this work also considers briefly the years 1912-1925 which witnessed the political stirrings of a new Western-educated elite, drawn from virtually all the communities, and the Government's decision to expand and strengthen communal representation. This raises a question how far separate representation encouraged the growth of communalism by providing wider opportunities for the political elite to appeal to the latent communal feelings of their communities.

A major question is the extent to which the activities of the Donoughmore Commission provided a forum for, or even provoked, a struggle between communal groups seeking advantage for themselves. A corollary is the degree to which the background and disposition of the Commissioners were significant: Lord Donoughmore, the Irishman, believing that the Irish issue should be 'settled by consent' rather than by force of arms; the Cornishman Butler thinking that the Duchy of Cornwall was 'completely separate from England'; and

Shiels, the Scottish Fabian, fervently believing that Scotland should have a separate existence. It may be questioned whether the deep awareness of their own minority condition was not reflected in their investigation and analysis of the minority problems in Ceylon.

Attention is paid to the evidence offered to the Commission and the interest groups which presented it, as a basis for grasping the nature of Ceylonese communalism; and for establishing a possible correlation between the nature of Ceylonese elites and the minority problem.

Finally the question is asked why, when the Commissioners' diagnosis, that communalism was the malaise of Ceylonese society, was similar to that of Montagu and Chelmsford in India they should have chosen unlike the Indian Reformers to abolish communal representation and to introduce universal suffrage.

Besides the written and oral evidence before the commission, the materials for this study were drawn from official sources, private papers and diaries, and contemporary newspapers and journals.

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INTRODUCTION

Society in Ceylon is pluralistic - a fabric of communities diversified on ethnic, caste and religious lines. The Report of the Donoughmore Commission[1] described this society as one made up of

> 'diverse elements, often with fundamental racial and religious differences. Even within the same racial and religious community caste distinctions may be responsible for rigid divisions of classes, even if not antagonistic to each other, are in more or less separate compartments, this resulting in a lack of homogeneity and of corporate consciousness which make it difficult to achieve any national unity of purpose'.[2]

Of the many ethnic groups there were the indigenous communities or those described collectively as the Ceylonese, and the non-indigenous groups.[3] The indigenous groups were Sinhalese (67 per cent), the Ceylon Tamils (11 per cent), the Muslims - the Moors and Malays (6 per cent) and the Burghers (0.8 per cent). The non-indigenous groups were the Indians (13 per cent) and a small European population of some 10,000. (See Tables 1 and 2).

The Sinhalese are widely believed to be the descendants of Aryans from North India, who settled in the Island some four or more centuries before Christ. They speak Sinhalese - an Indo-Aryan language - and are mainly Buddhists, following the Theravada tradition.[6] The Sinhalese are of two groups: the Low-country Sinhalese or the maritime lowlanders, and the Kandyans or the highlanders of the hill-country (up-country) districts. The Low-country Sinhalese who formed the bulk of the population of the Western, Southern and North-Western Provinces of the Island were more progressive and more 'cosmopolitan' in outlook than the Kandyans. The Low-country's longer and more intensive exposure to foreign influence was, no doubt, the reason.[7] The people of the Low-country were a little less than two thirds of the total Sinhalese population.

TABLE I

The Population of Ceylon by Race and Religion in 1921[4]

Race	Population	Buddhists	Hindus	Muslims	Christians	Others
All races	4,498,605	2,769,805	982,073	302,532	443,390	795
Low-country Sinhalese	1,927,057	1,662,717	411	71	263,793	65
Kandyan Sinhalese	1,089,097	1,081,082	235	25	7,745	10
Tamils	517,324	5,957	429,446	89	81,679	143
Indians	635,761	16,164	536,529	33,349	49,505	214
Ceylon Moors	251,938	33	14	251,877	14	-
Malays	13,402	17	2	13,375	6	2
Burghers and Eurasians	29,439	311	16	4	29,073	35
Europeans	8,118	18	-	-	8,036	64
Others	26,469	3,506	15,420	3,742	3,539	262

TABLE II

The Population of Ceylon by Race and Religion in 1931[5]

Race	Population	Buddhists	Hindus	Muslims	Christians	Others
All races	5,306,871	3,267,455	1,158,532	356,888	532,066	939
Low-country Sinhalese	2,273,291	1,961,457	485	84	311,188	77
Kandyan Sinhalese	1,284,775	1,275,320	277	29	9,137	12
Tamils	610,272	7,027	506,605	105	96,366	169
Indians	749,988	19,069	632,928	39,341	58,399	251
Ceylon Moors	297,204	38	17	297,132	17	-
Malays	15,810	20	2	15,778	7	3
Burghers and Eurasians	34,728	367	19	5	34,297	40
Europeans	9,577	21	-	-	9,480	76
Others	31,226	4,136	18,190	4,414	4,175	311

The Kandyans, on the other hand, occupied the Central, North-Central, Uva, and Sabaragamuwa Provinces and a part of the North-Western Province. Having been able to avoid direct foreign influence until recent times - till the British intrusion in 1815 - they had been able to preserve much of their traditional culture, customs, habits and way of life. Their population was a little over a third of the total Sinhalese population. The different degrees of modernization, no doubt, tended to create a gulf between the two sections of the Sinhalese population, and even led to separatist tendencies among some Kandyans during the period under review.

The reasons which led to this separatist tendency are, no doubt, deep and complex. But the fact that the movement was mainly confined to the traditional Goyigama elite - the Kandyan chieftain class - and that it was treated with indifference, if not suspicion, by the Kandyan non-Goyigama castes raises many important questions. These questions have to be identified and evaluated for a proper assessment of the Kandyan question. How much, for instance, was this separatist mood prompted by a fear of a gathering political, social and economic power of a, mainly non-Goyigama, new educated elite? Or how much was it based on the fear of losing the advantages derived from Buddhist Temporalities,[8] which were hitherto controlled by the traditional Kandyan elite? Or even how much was the movement prompted by apprehensions of the increasing political and economic power of the Karawas (fishermen caste) in the Kandyan Provinces? But, whatever the mood of the traditional Kandyan leadership, a deeper movement towards bridging the gulf between the two sections of the Sinhalese population seemed to be under way. Uneven development, which seems to have been the main cause of the division, was being remedied with the rapid modernization of the Kandyan Provinces; besides, there were the powerful forces of a common Buddhism, a common culture and a common language to help the process of unity.

The Ceylon Tamils were the largest ethnic minority group. They occupied mainly the Northern and Eastern Provinces. They were said to be the descendants

of South Indian Dravidian-Tamil immigrants who settled in Ceylon in ancient times. The original wave of Tamil immigration might have occurred around the same period that the Sinhalese occupied the Island. On the whole, however, they seemed to have lived in relative harmony with their Sinhalese neighbours for many centuries, and, perhaps, considerable blending took place between them. In the eleventh century, however, with the Cola occupation of Ceylon,[9] and increasing waves of South Indian immigration, the Tamils had been able to gather strength and eventually to establish a Tamil Kingdom in the North of Ceylon. This was the beginning of a period of wars, mainly of expansion, with the neighbouring Sinhalese kings. And it was, perhaps, this history of warfare which led to long term changes in the ethnic distribution in the Island. The centres of Sinhalese civilization began to move from the Dry Zone to the Wet Zone,[10] leaving the jungles of the Dry Zone as a sort of no-man's-land between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. This strict geographical separation was to prevent the mingling of the two races for many centuries. The Tamils were mainly Hindus and spoke Tamil - a Dravidian language with a rich literary culture and spoken also by some 30 millions in South India. Jaffna in the Northern Province was the capital of the Province and the cultural and religious centre of the Tamils: this is the reason for the Ceylon Tamils often being collectively termed Jaffna Tamils.[11]

The political, administrative and economic unification of the Island under the British, however, put an end to the Tamil isolation in the North and the East. Employment opportunities in Colombo, the capital - in the Sinhalese area - attracted many educated Tamil young men southwards. There was a great deal of mingling with other communities. And the turn of the century saw even the Tamil elite throwing in their lot with the rest in a struggle against Government's policy of restricting opportunities of higher employment for the Ceylonese and in demanding political concessions for the new Ceylonese elite. But their association with the Sinhalese in the Ceylon National Congress (1919) was to be

wrecked in 1921. The reasons for the split are many and varied. And in them, no doubt, rested the roots of Sinhalese-Tamil misunderstandings of years to come. How much was Government policy responsible for the split? What was the share of historical antagonism? How much were new theories of the antiquity and self-sufficiency of Dravidian culture - given a political content in contemporaneous South Indian politics in order to dethrone Brahminic (Aryan) power there - influential in guiding Dravidian Tamil thinking about the Aryan Sinhalese in Ceylon? How much was it due to Sinhalese elite insensitivity to Tamil feelings and demands? No proper assessment of the Tamil minority problem would be possible without providing answers to these questions.

Although Moors and Malays were from two different ethnic backgrounds, they had often been considered as one community - the Muslims - owing to their common Muslim faith. The Ceylon Moors were mainly the descendants of Arab traders of the Malabar coast, long settled in the Island. They bear the name given to them in the 16th century by the Portuguese, by whom all Muslims were so designated. They were keen traders and own the bulk of the small shops or 'boutiques' in the Sinhalese districts. In the Eastern Province, however, there were a number of them who owned land and were engaged in agriculture. The Ceylon Moors were distinguished from another group known as the Indian Moors or the Coast Moors who were said to be in Ceylon 'for trading purposes only, and who intend to return to their coasts'.[12] There were an estimated 34,427 Indian Moors in Ceylon in 1926.

The Malays, who were a very small community, were the descendants of the troops brought from Batavia, in Java, by the Dutch. Though for political purposes they were considered together with the Moors, they were a deeply self-aware group and were proud of their identity. They were mainly an urban group and tended to be concentrated in the Police Force and in other Government employment.[13]

The Muslims were settled mainly in the Western Province and the coastal areas of the Eastern Province, though many were scattered throughout the Island engaged in trading and shopkeeping. Their language varied with their milieu: they spoke Sinhalese or Tamil according to the area where they settled.

The period witnessed a deep internal crisis within the Muslim community. Ironically, the very political unity of Muslims that had been achieved in the twenties seemed to provide the proper climate for the germination of seeds of ethnic, regional, social and religious divisions inherent in the community. Occurring when it did - around the period of the Donoughmore Commission - the crisis within the Muslim community was perhaps a case in point where the Commission had acted as catalyst to release underlying tensions and hasten an explosion. But the separatist tendency of the 'liberal' Malay group from the more 'conservative' Moor group revealed the tensions of a community which was confronted with the problems of Islamic modernism.

The smallest indigenous ethnic minority was the Burgher community. The Burghers were Ceylon's Eurasians, being the descendants of the children of Portuguese, Dutch and British marriages with Ceylonese.[14] They adopted English language as their mother-tongue and were deeply Westernized. Separated from the Ceylonese community in respect of their language and ethnic origins, they as a group, tended to identify themselves with the British who offered them greater opportunities of social acceptance. Their European connection and their proficiency in English placed them in a position of advantage with regard to proliferating employment opportunities during the British period. Indeed, at one time the Clerical Service was almost entirely manned by them. The dedication and conscientiousness of the Burghers often made them prominent in the public and professional life of the Island. The Burghers - especially the Dutch Burghers - have given Ceylon many of its most eminent judges, lawyers, doctors and literary men.[15] They were mainly an urban group, concentrated on the larger cities of the Island. By religion they were Christian.

Perhaps no ethnic group in Ceylon had to face such complex and delicate problems of emotional and cultural adjustment as the Burghers in an age of transition. In a period of rapid political and social change, the community was at the cross roads: were they to continue to align themselves with the Europeans whose ability to offer them social acceptance and economic security was waning; or were they, in an age of national awareness, to search for avenues of increased social interaction and adjustment with the other Ceylonese groups? The dilemma created deep stresses and strains within this marginal community.

The ethnic mosaic was made the more complex by the presence in the Island of two non-traditional and non-indigenous groups - the Indians and Europeans - who were also socially distant from the indigenous population.

Of the Indians who numbered some 661,000, in 1926, more than 500,000 belonged to the mainly floating population of immigrant estate labourers imported from India by the European planters; the rest were mostly traders, shopkeepers and labourers employed in Government, Municipal or other work in the towns. Although the estate labourers lived in tea and rubber estate enclaves in Sinhalese-Buddhist areas, they lived their own lives as Hindus, spoke Tamil and barely mixed with the surrounding native population. They retained close contact with their kith and kin and made periodic journeys to their homes in India. Among the Indian population was also an economically important commercial community with the virtual monopoly of the wholesale import of dry fish, curry-stuffs and Indian textiles. This group wielded great economic power in the commercial world of Colombo. The Indian immigrant population, which by the period under consideration had increased to over ten per cent of the population of Ceylon, was transformed into an explosive minority problem. Earlier, the immigrants and their problems had been mainly the concern of the European planter, the Government of India and the Colonial Government. Now, new actors occupied the stage. With the grant of a measure of responsible government, and particularly the extension of franchise to Indians in the Donoughmore proposals, the Sinhalese elite and the politicians of India had joined the fray.

Sinhalese opposition to Indian enfranchisement nearly wrecked the Donoughmore proposals in toto; only compromise and conciliation on this issue enabled the final passage of the proposals. A proper understanding of the problem of the Indians is only possible in an analysis of the evident anti-Indian feeling of the Sinhalese. On the one hand, the Indians appeared to be the mere whipping boys for a deeply despised plantation system, which had, among other things, created a problem of land hunger among the Sinhalese population; while on the other hand, their concentration in large numbers in predominantly Sinhalese areas could have created fears of political 'swamping' of the 'permanent' population.

The Europeans, however, were in a very special position. Though they were the smallest community numerically, the general industrial and financial interests in the Island were predominantly in their hands. They were mainly planters, merchants, bankers, businessmen, superior artisans and members of the public service. Although a very few of them could have been regarded as permanent residents, the larger majority of them had their main interests and domicile outside Ceylon.

The vast political, social and economic changes in the Island mainly in the wake of reforms, had radically changed the position of the Europeans in Ceylon. From the 'special position' of the ruling race, they had, not least in their own eyes, become a frightened minority vis-a-vis the Ceylonese as a whole. The change in position was also reflected in a change of attitudes: a defensive European attitude to what they called the 'anti-European bias' of the Ceylonese; and an aggressive Ceylonese attitude to an alleged 'lack of sensitivity' of the Europeans to Ceylonese aspirations.

Ceylon's society should also be viewed in terms of its caste groupings. All observers of the social setting of Ceylon agree that the two caste systems in Ceylon - the Sinhalese caste system in the Sinhalese areas and the Tamil caste structure in the Tamil areas - had not the rigidity[16] that it had in

India. There was agreement too that of the two systems in Ceylon, the Sinhalese was the less severe and the less rigid. It was true, too, that with the onset of democratic values from the West, in recent times, caste's hold on Ceylonese society was diminishing all the while. But, social and political change in Ceylon may not be properly understood without an appreciation of the relations between the two majority castes - the Goyigama among the Sinhalese and the Vellala among the Tamils - and the minority castes.

In most societies, even in the open class model, the upper crust often consists of a privileged few at the peak of a social pyramid. In Ceylon, however, there was the unusual situation of an upturned pyramid where the majority castes, the Goyigamas and Vellalas - the cultivator castes - were claiming the highest status. This fact, surprising in itself, was, perhaps, suggestive of the functional quality of the caste structures in Ceylon: in the context of a feudal society,[17] with a basically agricultural economy, the cultivator could have easily become the pampered child of the state.

In the Sinhalese system there were some important regional variations: in Kandyan areas, for instance, the system was certainly more internally consistent and more integrated into other aspects of culture; and hence, it was said to be all-pervading and stricter than in the case of the Low-country.[18] There was this further difference in the structure itself, that some important Low-country castes like Karawas (fishermen), Salagamas (cinnamon peelers) and Durawas (toddy tappers) were non-existent in the Kandyan areas in traditional society; and that there were a number of strictly Kandyan castes like the Hannali (tailors) and Kinnaras (mat weavers). It is also difficult to determine the relative proportions of various Sinhalese castes in the absence of any reliable figures on castes. The Census Department considered inquiry into castes 'undesirable' as caste 'does not play in Ceylon the important part it does in India, where it is the basis of the whole social fabric'.[19] But if popular estimates are any indication, the Goyigamas alone constitute over 60 per cent of the whole Sinhalese population. Some 25 castes - excluding the

numerous sub-castes - which may compendiously be termed the Minority Castes make up the rest (40 per cent) of the Sinhalese population.[20]

Those students of caste as a social system often observed that the Sinhalese stratification, in contrast to the Indian one, was noteworthy for its 'unobtrusiveness', its mild and humanitarian quality and the absence of 'untouchability'.[21] It was indeed true, that in spite of ill-used low castes like Batgam-durayi and outcastes like Rodi there was not in the Sinhalese caste system the 'unclean' castes in the Hindu sense.

The Ceylon Tamils had a social organization distinct from that of the Sinhalese. Although parallels can be drawn of individual castes, the two systems are fundamentally different; the Tamil system being a more regional variant of the South Indian Hindu pattern.[22] A superficial, yet politically important, similarity is in the dominance of the Vellalas in Tamil areas, who like their counterparts the Goyigamas were in the majority and had been traditionally the land holders and cultivators. In Tamil Provinces, however, the stratification was more marked and the predominance of the Vellalas was virtually unchallenged - helped, no doubt, by the concentration of economic power in their hands. This was in contrast to the Sinhalese areas - at least, in the Low-country areas - where the Goyigama dominance was seriously challenged by groups like the Karawas, who had the advantage of superior wealth, education and push. In any case, the stricter social system of the Tamils in Jaffna was to create a special situation there: the problem of the 50,000 or so of the 'depressed classes'.[23]

The traditional upper castes - unwittingly helped by the Colonial power - had ~~the~~ initial advantage in being able to reinterpret and use the new institutions - political administrative, professional, educational and even judicial - to maintain their position of dominance. In the period under discussion, however, the minority castes, as well-organized pressure groups, were fighting back by an onslaught on high caste predominance and on Government's alleged approval of privilege. The Donoughmore Commission - in its expression of doubts about existing policy

on caste - dramatized the problem of caste minorities and thus helped a reversal of policy or forced the Government's hand to take a definite stand where there had been none.

In an Asian country like Ceylon where religion traditionally played such an important part in the culture and the life of the people, the understanding of the minority situation will not be complete without an appreciation also of the divisions in society on religious lines. Here again, as in the case of caste, there was a twofold religious minority situation; this was due to the presence in the Island of two main social structures - Sinhalese and Tamil - in two separate geographical settings, with the dominance of Buddhism in the one and Hinduism in the other. (See Tables 1 and 2 above.)

It will be observed that the Buddhists made up almost 65 per cent of the total population and 90 per cent of the Sinhalese population of the Island. In the Sinhalese areas, therefore, the Buddhists were in the majority and all other religious groups were minorities, In the Tamil enclave of Jaffna, however, almost 90 per cent of the Tamils were Hindus, thus creating a special minority problem - or what might be termed a double minority problem - there. Although in the wider context of all Ceylon the Hindus were outnumbered six to one, in their own Jaffna enclave they outnumbered the Christians there by ten to one. Strangely too, though the Tamils were a minority as an ethnic group and considered themselves as such, their traditional religion, Hinduism, had never been considered by the Ceylonese as a minority religion; there were at least two explanations: the concentration of Hinduism in the Tamil Provinces provided a certain independence from a wider Buddhism elsewhere; secondly, there was a certain traditional closeness between the Hindus and Buddhists of Ceylon: many Buddhists worshipped in Hindu temples and, indeed, some Buddhist temples had incorporated Hindu kovils within their confines. And true to the 'absorptive and synthetic' tradition of Hinduism, to many an eclectic Hindu, Buddhism was a true daughter of his own religion. Thus, it can be said that there were only two religious minorities in Ceylon: the Muslims who were a

minority in Sinhalese areas and the Christians who were a minority in the Sinhalese as well as the Tamil areas.

But in this age of national and Buddhist revival, the minority that really came under bitter attack and suspicion was the Christian minority. Islam as a religion was spared the epithet 'foreign' as it was considered an 'Eastern' religion, while Christianity was identified with the Westerner and hence considered a 'foreign' religion. Besides, Islam was not seen to pose the threat that Christianity was supposed to do. Some reasons for the opposition could be gathered. The concentration of educational institutions in the hands of Christians - thought to be a result of Government 'favouritism' - was one obvious reason; indeed, the issue of education was seen as crucial in an age of competition for employment in the public sector. But the fact also that the economically and socially powerful Karawas made up the bulk of Christians and that the revival was spearheaded mainly by the Goyigama elite makes it difficult to rule out a caste angle to the opposition.

There was thus a three-fold minority situation in Ceylon: the ethnic minorities - all the non-Sinhalese; the caste minorities - all the non-Goyigamas in Sinhalese areas, and non-Vellalas in Tamil areas of the country; and religious minorities - the Christians and the Muslims. There is, no doubt, some overlapping involved, among the various groups. But then, a study of the groups, along the lines of race, caste and religion, seems the best available method - in the context of Ceylon's society - to understand and appreciate the inter-group tensions of the period under consideration.

In traditional Ceylon, there was a certain communalism - what we might now call the 'old communalism'. The traditional, ethnic, caste and religious groups, hardly intermarrying, rarely intermingling, yet they had lived in relative harmony for many centuries. This peaceful co-existence may be attributed to the relative permanence of the strata of a feudal society in traditional Ceylon. This was a sort of apartheid imposed and accepted by the

communities themselves. In this society there were the minorities but without a minority problem; and there were different communities but without communalism[24] - at least, in the political, social and economic spheres as we see it today.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, however, the country was witnessing an active, and even bitter communalism - a 'new communalism' - which was actually the political form of the minority problem. What were the reasons for this transformation?

The climate for the change in inter-communal attitudes had been provided in the transformation, mainly during the British period,[25] of Ceylon's political, social and economic organization from a 'feudal and personal' to a 'highly centralized and modern' one.[26] But a more immediate reason might be traced to the very nature, developments and conflicts of an emerging group of educated elite - the new elite - which the changing society had brought into being. It will be observed, that the communal problem - and hence the minority problem - which took mammoth proportions during the period under review, was more a problem of the new elite of the various ethnic, caste and religious groups than one of the communities themselves. What has to be noted, however, is that inherent in the elite conflict were the seeds of the wider conflict. Hence, the need to investigate the genesis, nature and development of this new group in order to make a proper assessment of the minority problem in Ceylon.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, all the signs were indicative of a wider Ceylonese society's clear response to the new forces of modernization - the complex and inter-connected social, idealogical and economic changes. Even the more traditionalist Kandyan society, which came under the sway of the Colonial power last, did not escape these forces. In a society where an ancient system of conditional tenure had been the general rule, the changes in property relationships and acquisition and ownership of land by traditionally non-landowning people came to be accepted as a fact. A money

economy was gradually replacing the natural economy of a former age. With the improvement of the methods of transportation and the availability of extra-village markets, new commercial crops grew in importance and a great deal of money was in circulation. But what is significant, among all these changes, was the climate of individualism that these factors provided; the customary feudal links and traditional economic relationships tended to be weakened. By the turn of the century, there was already a class of people - not necessarily limited to the traditionally land-owning groups - who had successfully tried their hand at planting non-traditional commercial crops, and had taken to new enterprises like plumbago mining, to amass considerable fortunes.

Western-oriented education, too, perhaps more than any other factor, was paving the way for change. Although the new school system as a whole - vernacular and English-speaking schools alike - was contributing to this mood of change, the English-medium schools took the real initiative in this new orientation. These secondary schools (known as colleges, in Ceylon) were not turning out farmers and craftsmen to man the situations of a traditional society, but were providing, mainly, an elite type[27] responsive to proliferating employment opportunities in the Government and Mercantile Services and the professions. They were often able to converse in English, wore Western dress (trousers) and were addressed as mahatmaya (a form of honourable address such as "Sir") by the ordinary villager - an obvious recognition of a new status. This was an emerging class, the Westernized elite or new elite. There was, naturally, some overlapping between this new elite and those who had used the new economic advantages to become rich; so that the new rich were often from this class of the new elite. In any case, although their heterogeneity is undenied, the term 'new elite' would be the best in the circumstances to take in the whole of the 'counter elite' which the modernizing forces had helped to create vis-a-vis an 'established elite' or what might be more suitably termed the 'traditional elite'. Thus in Ceylon's

society - in a broad classification - there were two elite groups: an old traditional group, the traditional elite, and a new group which was non-traditional, emerging in the wake of modernizing forces of Ceylon's society, the new elite.

What was most noteworthy about this new group was its caste composition: in Sinhalese society it was not confined to the traditionally dominant Goyigama aristocratic families, but included the 'ordinary' Goyigamas (sometimes known as the 'second class' Goyigamas), the Karawas, Salagamas, Durawas, Hunus and even some of the so-called low castes such as the Radawas (washermen) and Wahumpuras (jaggory makers). In other words, this was altogether a new development in the social fabric of the Sinhalese; this was a group across castes; though it was not a deeply coherent one, it was, nevertheless, a loose category by itself, recruited from most castes of the Sinhalese social spectrum with a cohesive potential in relation to other groups. In Tamil areas too there was a similar development. There the new elite were not confined to the traditionally dominant, land holding Vellalas but recruited also from influential castes like the Karayars (fishermen) and Koviars (originally the servants of the Vellalas).

However, for a fuller understanding of their emergence and their struggles, the new elite must be viewed in the context of the traditional elite, who were mainly the chiefs and the network of subordinate officialdom - headmen and minor headmen.[28] These had been drawn from the Goyigamas or their Tamil equivalent, the Vellalas. Early European writers observed the predominance of these caste groups; referring to the Kandyan areas, John Davy observed that the people of

> 'Goyiwansa [Goyigama caste] are a privileged people, and monopolize all the honours of Church and State and possess all hereditary rank in the country'.[29]

But even so, the plums of higher office had been limited to some of the leading families of this caste.

The British, who introduced the traditional Headman System[30] into their administrative framework, continued the practice of making appointments to all the Chief Headmanships from the dominant castes.[31] In a reference to the Kandyan Provinces, the Governor, in 1926, expressed the Government's attitude to these appointments; he observed that,

> 'in the Kandyan Provinces, where for more than a hundred years the posts of Ratemahatmayas and Koralas have been the recognized perquisites of scions of leading aristocratic families - the British during that period having merely continued in this respect the immemorial practice of Kandyan Kings...'[32]

And as the British also continued the 'immemorial practice' of making appointments of minor headmen on the recommendations of the Chief Headmen, these latter as well turned out to be from the closed circle of the dominant castes. The result, of course, was obvious: the Headman System continued to be the preserve of the Goyigamas and the Vellalas, with the blessing of the Colonial power. And through the Headman System - the network of chief and minor headmen, with the power and influence it could wield among the people - the dominant elite were able to continue well into the Colonial period their traditional leadership role among the peasantry.

The traditional elite leadership was thus one based on privilege - recruited from dominant castes, and, strictly, the upper echelons of those castes. Till almost the end of the 19th century, this group was able to preserve its position because it had access to all the dimensions of privilege: status, wealth and power.

Status: it was true that they were no longer the ruling elite; there were the Government Agents of British power at the head of Provinces and districts. But while the white Agent was hardly seen or heard in the interior and was socially remote from the ordinary peasant, the traditional elite remained where it mattered, among the people; while the Government Agents were in their Kachcheris (provincial or district offices) entangled in a morass of administrative detail, the headmen could and did pose as the

repository of power among the people. They were thus able to use their positions to preserve social esteem among the ordinary people.

Wealth: historically they had been the landholding families in an agrarian society where land was the primary source of wealth. A fair proportion of these families had been able to conserve their landed wealth in spite of serious land speculation around them. There were allegations, too, that this group had used their position to enhance their wealth. After a series of sustained charges of corruption against some chief headmen, a national daily editorialized:

> 'They have battened on the poor, and have justly earned their distrust and resentment. Mudaliyars are supposed to be chosen for the wealth, status and influence they possess in their districts. But the universal experience is that these things do not lead to, but follow in the wake of Mudaliyarships'.[33]

Power: being the instruments of Governmental power at the ground-level, they could and did use their powers to maintain sanctions - not legal and crude as in a former age, but subtle and penetrating, nevertheless - to control social behaviour. By a cautious use of reward and punishment, incentive and threat, social norms were maintained in order to preserve their predominant position in society. The British unwittingly helped in this group's power position when they - at least till 1910 - made political appointments to the Legislative Council exclusively from this group. The British helped them again when they placed the control of the Village Committee System in their hands: the Village Communities Ordinance of 1899 had stipulated that the chief headman of each Division should be the ex officio Chairman of every Village Committee operating within that area. As the Village Committees were empowered to make laws for the management of purely local affairs, to punish breaches of them, and to raise funds for expenditure upon various village services, the traditional elite group which controlled the system had in their hands an instrument of tremendous power to enforce normative patterns of social behaviour at the village level.

By the turn of the century, the new elite were a social reality and their impact on Ceylon's social organization too was undeniable. But what is more

significant was that their emergence was creating if not a revolution at least a crisis-situation in traditional social values: if traditional status was ascribed by birth, based on caste and family alone, in the new social milieu, although these old criteria were not destroyed altogether, new criteria such as an English education, competence and merit were also emerging as determinants of status. A certain 'meritocracy'[34] was emerging alongside the traditional elite. Whereas in the past the traditional elite were the sole leaders in Ceylon, people could now look up to a separate set of leaders in the emergent group. There was also this further difference: that the upper layer of this new elite unlike the traditional elite were not mere local leaders, as most of these were associated with national and nationalist organizations like the Ceylon National Congress.[35] Thus, they were better placed in a possible struggle for leadership.

The new elite's bid for power entailed a struggle on two fronts: one was to wrest social leadership from the traditional groups, and the other, with the Administration, for political power. The close co-operation of the non-Goyigama (strictly, non-aristocratic Goyigama) castes, mainly in the Mahajana Sabha Movement,[36] in the Sinhalese areas of the country, and the bitter onslaught on the Headman System - considered to be the 'citadel of entrenched privilege' - were two of the visible signs of the first phase of the conflict. It might be observed in passing, that the core of the Kandyan minority question seems to lie within the ambit of this struggle: the attempts of the new elite there, with the active co-operation of the Low-country elite, to wrest the leadership from the old hands; and the traditional elite's search for separation as a potent device to outmanoeuvre the new elite.[37] Except, perhaps, for the case of the Kandyan question, this phase of the struggle proved, if anything, a binding force on the communities in Ceylon.

The second phase of the struggle,- the one with the Administration - however, had far reaching effects on the minority question. Though the struggle itself brought the elite of the various communities together, the

partial success of the struggle, and, perhaps more, the response of the Administration to the struggle were to prove divisive. The struggle took the form of the Reform Movement. The movement, which began as an awakening of political consciousness around the turn of the century, was stimulated and strengthened by the Government's tactless handling of the Riot of 1915.[38] The Ceylon National Association (1909) and the Ceylon Reform League (1917), which were the earlier platforms for the voicing of the Ceylonese elite's political aspirations, gave place in 1919 to the Ceylon National Congress. Hailed as a 'great national institution which portrayed vividly the union of peoples' of Ceylon,[39] the Congress fulfilled the new elite's hopes of elite harmony for the future. In their desire to be rid of the 'inherent evils of a Crown Colony administration' and their demand for the 'grant of a definite measure of progressive advance' towards self-government, they displayed the signs of an awakening nationalism and all the aspirations it entailed.[40] Indeed, the absence of such aspirations would have been surprising in a Westernized elite alive to the social and idealogical currents and cross-currents blowing through Europe of that period. But observing their background and development, the new elite's nationalist aspirations did not seem to be the all-pervading, or even perhaps the determining, motivation behind the Reform Movement. The nationalist hopes do not seem to have been altogether unmixed with the prospect of economic advantages and the prestige value which political ascendancy would bring to this group. The last reason seems especially relevant in the context of their struggle with the traditional leadership.

Ponnambalam Arunachalam's "On Our Political Needs", perhaps the most powerful articulation of the new elite's case for reforms, for instance, embodied relevant references to their hopes and frustrations in the area of public service appointments. The fact,also, that the Reform Movement was new elite-initiated and new elite-dominated and was not by any stretch of

imagination a popular movement - so unlike the Indian case, at least after Gandhi - tends to strengthen the view that their own expectations were at the core of their thinking.

Nor can the motives of the prestige potential of the political ascendancy of this group be dismissed lightly. The fact that the first stirrings of Ceylonese political consciousness were mainly from the ranks of the affluent Karawas, and the virtual absence of the so-called 'first-class' Goyigamas from the Reform Movement, could be attributed to a search for upward social mobility through the Reform Movement. This was, in fact, the interpretation of the Administration; Sir Hugh Clifford, who was the Colonial Secretary (1907-1912) during the birth of the Reform Movement, and later the Governor during the period under study, (1925-1927), observes:

> 'It is also notorious in Ceylon that the agitation for the reform of the Constitution had as its origin the revolt of the rich, well-educated and ambitious members of the Karawa caste against the high-caste Vellalas (Goyigamas) who, until then, had always been nominated by the Governor to represent the Sinhalese community in the Legislative Council.'[41]

And here, precisely, in the heterogeneity of the group and diversity of motive of the Reform Movement lurked the communal cracks that could easily be widened into a chasm. Indeed, in the partial success of the Reform Movement - the achievement, in 1920, of representative government, and in the aftermath of the elections of 1921 - there was already the parting of the ways for those who had stood together in the struggle. The Ceylon National Congress was 'emasculated' by the general withdrawal of the minority elite - Kandyans, Ceylon Tamils, Indians, Muslims and Burghers. The Congress turned out to be, in 1921, a predominantly Low-Country elite organisation.

Searching for reasons for the elite 'split', one discovers minority fears - genuine, yet in some ways unfounded, at least, as far as past experience was concerned - of majority domination; the majority elite's tactlessness and lack of goodwill were also to play an important part in the division. The elections of 1921 had warned the minority leaders of the deeper implications

of the principle of territorial representation. The Tamil elite, for instance, who had led the minority groups, were disturbed by the loss of the equal proportion of representation with the Sinhalese, which they had enjoyed in the pre-1920 Constitution. The Sinhalese elite, on the other hand, had lost an opportunity to reassure the minorities: they had been determined to, and actually did, capture all the seats in the Sinhalese areas; the Sinhalese elite in the Congress had not sponsored or supported any minority candidate in the Sinhalese areas.[42] Even the private ambitions of the elite did not seem to be absent: the earmarking of the seat of the City of Colombo for James Peiris, in spite of Ponnambalam Arunachalam's desire to represent it, had, no doubt, a great deal to do with the Tamil leader's disenchantment with the Congress. It was significant that Arunachalam's political conversion to the principle of communal representation was after the elections of 1921, after years of ardent advocacy of territorial electorates.[43]

It has to be noted, however, that, in 1921, the split was still on the elite level - and not one of the communities at large. If such a distinction - between the elite and the masses - is not valid elsewhere, in the Ceylon of 1921 it would be a reasonable supposition for many reasons. The traditional leadership, for instance, had been a privileged group which received its legitimacy and power from above; this group's relationship with the people had been a feudal one till the British had introduced them within the framework of the administrative apparatus. The new elite, who attempted to replace them, were of a new mould. Emerging from the foundations of wealth and education, they were mainly self-made men. They were Westernized in their ways and outlook and a great gulf separated them from the masses. Their organisations, including the Ceylon National Congress, were elitist, hardly generating any popular enthusiasm. When they did make their grade politically in 1921, they did so with the aid of a tiny electorate based on qualifications of education and wealth - about four per cent of the population. There had been

no need to appeal to the masses and they had not appealed. The gulf between the new elite and the masses had thus remained mainly unbridged.

The reasons discussed above - the transformation of society, the struggles of the new elite with the old elite's economic, social and political ambitions and their errors - may explain a great deal of the circumstances around the elite bickering and even their imbroglio. But they do not seem sufficiently to account for an incentive to divide and seek to perpetuate those divisions by an appeal to their various communities.

The practicability of a division or the viability of a divided situation would have had to be a necessary condition, in the mind of the minority elite, before the actual split. To put it another way, considering the political status of Ceylon during this period - a British Colony with a British administration - it does not seem unreasonable to suppose that the minority elite were tempted to, or actually did, divide only in the context of the political philosophy in existence and, at least, with the acquiescence of the Administration. Indeed, the picture that emerges from a study of the split was that such a philosophy was in existence in Ceylon and that the rift had a great deal to do with the Administration's handling of the various groups and their problems.

A recent writer on Ceylon's problems observed:

> 'Not only did British introduce new elements into Ceylonese ethnic structure; but it was during the British period that communal and caste tensions grew in force and that communal suspicions - which have taken tremendous proportions in present times - began to darken the scene, though one hastens to add, not so much directly, through deliberate policy, as indirectly through the revolutionary changes, in the Government, economy and society of Ceylon.'[44]

On the whole, this is true. No evidence has yet emerged of 'deliberate policy' to create a communal or minority problem, though the elite frequently imputed such motives to the Administration. But there seems more to it than mere 'revolutionary changes, in the Government, economy and society of Ceylon'. There were, perhaps with the most admirable of motives, attempts to find solutions of the moment, and a great deal of makeshift arrangements and experimentation. The introduction, for instance, of communal representation

was such a makeshift - an experiment. And as the minority situation is tied up with communal representation as with no other single issue, an inquiry into its history and psychology is indispensable.

In 1831, the Report of a Royal Commission[45] had argued for the participation of the native Ceylonese in the government of the country. It is, however, to be noted that they did not advocate communal representation. They merely recommended the 'admission of respectable inhabitants, European or native whom His Majesty might hereafter be pleased to appoint'.[46] The Governor of the period, Sir William Horton, who believed that there were in Ceylon 'three distinct nations, if they can be so called, Sinhalese, Malabars (Tamils) and Moors, all having equal claim to representation in the Legislative Council',[47] set out on the road to communal representation by appointments to the Legislative Council on communal lines: among the non-officials appointed were a Sinhalese (Low-Country), a Tamil and a Burgher. A beginning was thus made in constitutional government in which the Ceylonese had a share; but a beginning was also made in the introduction of the communal principle in the Constitution, when it was not even requested by the Ceylonese.

The fundamental principles of this constitution survived until 1910. Minor adjustments were made to accommodate criticism, but the communal principle remained as the basis of nominating Members of the Legislative Council.

Around the turn of the century, the emergent new elite - a fair mixture of races, religions and castes - were agitating for a greater share in the government of the country. The elite, which Governor McCallum reluctantly agreed 'pay progressively less and less attention to the racial, religious and caste distinctions',[48] were alive to the divisive nature of the existing system of communal representation. F.J. de Mel (a Karawa), a representative of the new elite, argued in 1907: 'is not this racial representation - it matters little whether elected or nominated - not only primitive, but, utterly unsuited to a progressive country like Ceylon?'[49] The reforms suggested by

this group were the abolition of racial representation and the introduction of a system of territorial representation on a provincial basis. It is significant that the educated Tamil elite of the period also thought on similar lines.[50]

In 1908, Mr. (later Sir) James Peiris (a Karawa), at the suggestion of the Secretary of State for Colonies, forwarded a long and well-argued memorandum on the subject of reforms, which embodied the thinking of the educated elite of the time. The document, while expressing the local desire for greater involvement in the government, argued forcefully for territorial election in place of the communal system which was declared to be extremely dangerous for the unity of the country.[51]

In 1909, a number of memorials from some responsible elite organizations in Ceylon were forwarded to the Secretary of State. All the memorials carried a similar message: greater representation of the natives, a non-official majority, territorial constituencies and the abolition of communal representation. The Jaffna Association, an Organization of Ceylon Tamils in the North, in its memorial requested that 'provincial be substituted for racial representation',[52] The Ceylon National Association, an organization of educated Ceylonese of all races, whose President in 1909 was a Burgher, called for 'measures to place the Legislative Council on an elective basis.'[53]. The Chilaw Association, an organization of the planters of the Chilaw district,[54] thought that the only sensible step that should be taken in the existing climate of political development was the discontinuance of racial representation.[55]

But the Administration was not prepared for any devolution of power to an elected Legislative Council, at this stage. Governor McCallum was quite content to maintain the status quo. His case against any reforms was really a case against an elite class he disliked intensely. He was opposed to handing over power to a class of 'professional politicians' who would cause 'unrest and distraction among the ignorant masses' and whose presence in Council

would contribute 'neither to the dispatch of business nor to the tranquility of the Colony'.[56]

The Governor, however, was not oblivious of the Earl of Crewe's (Secretary of State) liberal leanings and his sympathy for the aspirations of the new elite; and this, no doubt, made him less uncompromising. He declared himself not averse to 'nominating' a member of the new educated elite class to the Legislative Council. But this compromise was accompanied by a generous gesture to the Burgher community when he suggested a special communal seat for them in the Legislative Council. This embarrassing kindness of the Governor was a surprise even to the Burgher community who had barely made such a clear-cut request for special representation. The ostensible reason for this generosity was said to be their superior education as a community. The elite, however, found their own reasons for what they called 'this racial favouritism': that this was a carefully worked out stratagem to cripple Ceylonese elite unity, by taking the wind out of the sails of the united Ceylonese front; and that by diverting an active and energetic section away from the Reform Movement.

Although Crewe agreed that Ceylonese opinion as a whole had advocated the abolition of communal representation and the introduction of territorial representation, he too agreed with the Governor that it would not be proper to hand over power to a 'small section of the community' whose views are 'divergent and even antagonistic' to those held by the great majority of their fellow countrymen. But whereas the Governor hoped to be able to nominate the Burgher and the Educated Ceylonese Members, he found himself denied this prestigious duty. Crewe wanted them to be elected.[57]

If the special treatment meted out to the Burgher community was resorted to as a political expedient - to effect Burgher disengagement from agitational politics - it was indeed a success. The Burghers were to be unenthusiastic about reforms ever afterwards. The Ceylonese historian, G.C. Mendis commented on the McCallum Reforms:

> 'On the whole the reforms helped to perpetuate the divisions in society, the special interests of which the British system of administration for over a century had tended to obliterate. Though the educated Ceylonese electorate brought together the English educated classes among the Sinhalese, the Tamils and the Muslims, the grant of a special electorate to the Europeans and the Burghers helped these communities to consider themselves as separate rather than citizens of Ceylon.'[58]

Eventually, by the Royal Instruction of 1910, the Scheme of the Secretary of State was published. In a Council of eleven official and ten non-official members, four of the latter were to be elected - two Europeans, one Burgher and one educated Ceylonese. The rest (6) of the non-official members were to be nominated on a communal basis.

When elections were finally held in 1912, the election of a Tamil (Ponnambalam Ramanathan) to the educated Ceylonese seat by the predominantly Sinhalese electorate was a surprising result to the Administration as well as to the country. Although a caste explanation has been provided for the result - that the Goyigamas preferred Ramanathan, a Tamil Vellala, to his opponent, Marcus Fernando, a Sinhalese Karawa[59] - no one could mistake the absence of deep racial bias in this whole episode.

In the war years (1914-1918), agitation for further reforms was continued by the new elite; the Riots of 1915 and their aftermath, as observed earlier, only provided an added impetus for further agitation. In 1917, the Ceylon Reform League and the Ceylon National Association stepped up a campaign for the abolition of communal representation by a series of memorials to the Secretary of State. And by 1919, with the inauguration of the Ceylon National Congress, the movement for reform had gathered momentum.

An Order in Council, promulgated in 1920, promised for the first time a non-official majority in the Legislative Council. And in a subsequent despatch, Lord Milner, the Secretary of State, assured that the bulk of the non-official members would be elected by popular constituencies, based on a wider franchise.[60] But when the details of the Reforms were published, it was discovered that only eleven of the 23 non-officials were to be elected

territorially while the rest were to be elected by communal electorates or nominated by the Governor. The Reforms were based on the famous 'balance of power' theory of Governor Sir William Manning (1918-1925): the representation had been so arranged that 'while every community shall be represented and while there is a substantial non-official majority, no single community can impose its will on other communities, if the latter are supported by official members.'[61]

This package of reform was, to say the least, surprising. The principle of communal representation had been extended and a new communal principle - balance of power - introduced into the Constitution. Though the ostensible reason for the measures was safeguarding the minorities, they had actually been introduced unasked for; when no single recognized body of minority elites had requested them; and indeed, when the organization of the united elite groups - the Ceylon National Congress - had actually agitated for the abolition of such measures. The Governor himself, in a later secret despatch, provided a reason that must have been obvious to the elites: that communal representation and the balance of power were essential, and territorial electorates intolerable, as otherwise the Sinhalese and the Tamils could unite against the Government, a situation which to the Governor would have been a 'very unsatisfactory state of affairs and one which would be greatly resented'.[62] The elite - mainly the Sinhalese - were plainly incensed; commented one:

> 'it means in plain language that Ceylon cannot be given a Constitution under which even the unanimous voice of the Sinhalese and Tamil people who form 95 per cent of the population is to prevail. And why? Because it will be greatly resented. By whom? Presumably by the 5 per cent. Can you conceive of a popular assembly in this country in which the Sinhalese and the Tamils together will not be in a majority? Can you imagine anything like the cool effrontery of those who take upon themselves to resent such a result?'[63]

Then there was the rift in 1921. Polarization seemed complete.

And hardly a year after the split of the elite, in the Ceylon National Congress, the Secretary of State, the Duke of Devonshire, agreed with the

Governor that society in Ceylon was a veritable theatre of communal hates: because of the nature of Ceylonese society, the Secretary of State maintained, 'representation must for an indefinite period of time in fact be communal' and because in Ceylon 'the organization of society is communal, even representatives returned by territorial electorates will be in substance communal representatives', the minorities, he argued, will be in serious danger either of being inadequately represented or of not being represented at all. His conclusion was that: it will be many years before the mass of the electorate 'develop a political instinct sufficient to rise above racial and religious divisions'.[64]

There was one question that could have been raised - in fact, it was raised by the Sinhalese elite - how was it that Devonshire and Manning found the communal situation in 1923 intolerable, incurable and hopeless when it was a fact that up to 1920 even the Tamils were clamouring for unity? 'Unless it can be proved' the Sinhalese elite argued, 'that during the past four or five years the people of Ceylon have degenerated into a state of crude tribalism from which they may not emerge for long years to come, there is clearly no justification for the Governor's contention'. They had a ready-made explanation: that minority apprehension was a creation of the Government and the demand for communal representation by the minorities was due to the policy of the Government which had 'inaugurated' it and had 'officially cherished and nursed' it ever since; the Governor, they said, had 'utilized' a temporary situation created by himself to perpetuate sectionalism for his own purposes.[65] Their contention was that the rift was <u>because of</u> Manning's encouragement of communal representation and his use of it as a guiding principle in the Constitution in 1920. It was strangely true that minority fears of 'majority domination' - at least their open voicing of it - occurred <u>after</u> 1920, that is, after Manning's use of them as arguments for the 'apotheosis' of the communal principle as a determining principle of reform. Although in the context, the Sinhalese elite view was inevitable, and,

perhaps understandable, the real influence of Manning's policy of communal representation on the rift will remain problematical.

In 1923, Manning introduced some amendments to his Reforms of 1920; and they were clearly based on his analysis of Ceylonese society. Balance of power was further strengthened by introducing disproportionate representation to the minorities - particularly to the Tamils; and communal representation was widened in the Constitution by the increase of the number of communal representatives in the country; and a new communal seat was added for the Tamils in the Western Province(the Colombo Seat). These reforms - mainly the introduction of the Colombo Seat, described as a 'piece of localized communalism' - only helped to aggravate communal tensions.

Not that Manning had not been warned of the consequences of the introduction of communal representation as a determining principle in the Constitution. In the famous Ceylon Debate in the House of Commons, before the introduction of the Reforms of 1920, most of the speakers, from Government and Opposition benches alike, were solidly against communal representation. It was left to the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, Col. L.C.M.S. Amery, to defend the proposals almost alone.

Josiah Wedgewood, a friend of the Ceylonese elite, led the bitter attack on the Government's policy; 'if you once start on the line of communal representation', he warned,

> 'then farewell to any real co-operation of the inhabitants of that Colony....It is sought to divide the people of the Colonies, so as to play off one interest against the other and govern through the disorder of the people governed...that is the ultra-fashionable method of governing a subordinate race. So long as you can keep the rival interests going then you may remain in the saddle and govern through setting one class against another. That is not a policy which any British Government based upon traditions of this country ought to continue.'[66]

The Colonial Office was blamed for creating divisions that were not there: 'up to now there has been no gulf between the races in Ceylon as in India'; indeed, this was said to be giving Ceylon 'something that the Indian Government - even the worst bureaucrat of the Indian Government - would

never dream of foisting upon Madras or Bombay'. The worst aspect of this piece of reform was said to be the tendency to experiment on a nation. Col. Amery, who replied, rejected an appeal to review the situation in Ceylon through a Commission before the introduction of communal representation; its introduction was preferable, the Under-Secretary declared, to handing over power to a 'handful of lawyers'; he preferred to put these proposals into effect first and then consider the possibility of further changes.

Though there seemed to be general disapproval of communal representation among most speakers in the debate - across Party lines - what was significant was the Labour Party's outright condemnation of it. Josiah Wedgwood spoke for the rest of his party when he warned: 'if we in the benches ever assume power, in this country, we want to give notice now that the whole of this scheme of communal representation will be swept away.'[67]

What seems clear in the study of the history of communal representation in Ceylon is that the communal principle had been introduced into the Constitution when there was no demand for such a principle by the communities themselves - indeed, when there was a unanimous demand against the principle. What then could be the reason for its introduction? There seems little doubt that motives of 'fairness' to minority communities were predominant. Such a view seems consonant with the mentality of most Colonial Governors of Ceylon who considered themselves in the role of arbiters and benevolent protectors of helpless communities in what they assumed to be a tyrannical, caste-ridden, race-ridden Oriental society. The Sinhalese elite, however, not unpredictably, saw darker and sinister motives behind it all; they saw motives of *divide et impera* behind the policy.

Though such a deliberate motive seems doubtful, there is reason to believe that the creation and perpetuation of communal representation had greatly to do with the needs of the British Government and the European population in the country. *The Round Table*, for instance, discovered two such motives: one was that communal representation served, perhaps as a trump card in the hands

of the Government to delay self-determination to the Colony, because

> 'by imposing cast-iron limits of representation in the Legislature, alterable only at the pleasure of some external authority the communal system, so long as it endures, involves a palpable bar to the attainment of real self-government';

the journal's second suggestion was that the influence of the European - mainly the planting and commercial - groups could be detected in the creation of the communal system, because, there is 'no doubt' the journal observed

> 'that some of the support which the idea of representation according to communities rather than territory has attracted is due to the fear that the security of a numerically small white community of superior civilization would be jeopardised if its members had to vote in open constituencies where they might be hopelessly outnumbered by native votes.'[68]

Whatever the motives behind the policy, it does not seem possible to deny a certain tendency to use communal representation as a solution of the moment - as an experiment. The thoughts of the impact of this policy on the future of communal relations in Ceylon did not seem to have occurred to the policy-makers at all. Under attack, Manning's Attorney General declared in Council:

> 'I maintain, Sir, there is no evidence of the alleged homogeneity...I maintain as a matter of fact, this Constitution had been adopted to meet not hopes, not opinions, but the actual facts, as they exist in Ceylon of today.'[69]

Again, whatever the motives, the after-effects of policy seemed clear enough: communal representation seemed to have provided what The Round Table called the encouragement in the minorities of 'a feeling of dulled security' and in the majority of 'a propensity to licence' and it had further been the 'enemy of the give and take which is the essence of political life'.[70] In actual fact, the spirit of the give and take which marked the relations between the majority and the minorities in the pre-1920 Reform period suddenly disappeared in the aftermath of the Reforms. The Sinhalese 'propensity to licence' became obvious in their desire to capture all the available seats in the Sinhalese areas and their bitter opposition to the Tamil seat in the Western Province; on the other hand, after 1920 were observed also the minority 'feelings of dulled security' in their unwillingness to compromise; the Tamil snub to Sinhalese overtures for a rapprochement is a case in point: it is

almost with a sense of bravado that a Tamil memorandum to the Governor relates that,

> 'several attempts have been made by the Congress to lure them (Tamils) to join it...but they have absolutely refused to do so. A deputation of Sinhalese leaders of the Congress visited Jaffna for that purpose and conferring with the Tamil leaders returned disappointed.'[71]

The Governor only aggravated the situation. He hastily despatched the above and such other 'evidence', with appropriate covering despatches, to demonstrate the divided nature of Ceylon's society. The Governor's utterances, on the other hand, actually helped to aggravate an already difficult situation.[72]

But there was a more serious aspect of the policy of communal representation. This was the outcome of a mis-analysis of the communal situation prior to formulation of policy. The open, active communalism that existed in Ceylon during this period was an elite communalism, that is, one based on the bickerings and antagonisms of the new elite of the various communities. To consider this a malady of the communities at large would have been a misunderstanding of the society of Ceylon of the period. The Administration's new policy seemed to be based on a misunderstanding of this aspect of Ceylon's society. But the outcome of policy was obvious: what ~~had~~ been till then a division of elites was fast becoming a division of the communities at large. It was in the very nature of communal representation that the representatives should appeal to their own communities for support. This did happen. And in such a climate the polarization of communities was inevitable. The Administration had unwittingly helped the percolation of elite tensions into the very core of their communities.

In the meantime, the Manning Reforms had led to a grave constitutional crisis. Manning's obsession with communal balancing in the Legislature had apparently made him inattentive to the other aspects of the Constitution. By creating a non-official majority in the Legislature without responsibility he had actually created a monstrosity. Already, in 1926, Manning's successor, Sir Hugh Clifford, was demanding a 'small Royal Commission' to resolve the

'deadlock' arising out of the Reforms. He complained that, in the circumstances,

> 'the prudent and efficient administration of the Colony's affairs cannot any longer be insured; that the divorcement of responsibility from power is wholly mischievous in its effects and consequences; and that the precipitation of a deadlock is merely a matter of time.'

Manning's arrangement, he added, had encouraged the non-officials to use 'the power placed in their hands capriciously, mischievously and with complete irresponsibility, while leaving an emasculated Executive to cope as best it may with the results of their actions'.[73]

It was true that the Constitution created a number of difficult problems; but it had not proved altogether unworkable. What, then, were Clifford's reasons for demanding a commission? His very despatch seems to suggest that his attitude was no mere over-reaction to a situation but one dictated by a personal reason. For, one cannot miss the impression that by demanding a commission he was attempting to recover a lost image; among the arguments for a commission he mentions his own misunderstandings with the elites; he noted that

> 'their attitude of aggression and their deep-rooted suspicion and distrust of the Government also forcibly struck me; and I think there can be no doubt that the fact of my appointment acted as a stimulant in these respects. As a former Colonial Secretary, who had held that office during a period anterior to and during the earlier tentative reforms of the Legislative Council - to which it was well known that I, for a variety of reasons, had been opposed - it was not unnaturally assumed that I should prove strongly reactionary, and that I should impart a new vitality to the school of thought which holds that our efforts should be directed toward an attempt to carry on the government of the country, as nearly as possible, as though no reforms of the Constitution had ever been agreed upon'.

The appointment of a commission to consider further reforms, made at his request, would have been seen by him as a way of pacifying the elite; he could then create the impression that he was the champion of their aspirations. The fact also that time was running out on him - he was aware of his new appointment as Governor of the Malay States - provides another reason why he was so anxious to hurry up the appointment of a commission.[74]

But the Colonial Office, when it introduced the reforms of 1924, had declared its intention not to tamper with the changes for at least five years, that is till 1929. However, the situation in England made it reconsider the decision; W.G. Ormsby-Gore, the Under Secretary of State, advised the Secretary of State that a commission, if at all, should be appointed well before the General Election to be held in early 1929, because 'it would not be easy to get parliamentarians in the autumn of 1928 and...it is best to arrange for November 1927'.[75] As far as the Colonial Office was concerned, this seemed a good enough reason for overriding its own decision.

On the 9 April 1927, the Government announced the appointment of a Special Commission,

> 'to visit Ceylon and report on the working of the existing Constitution and on any difficulties of administration which may have arisen in connection with it; to consider any proposals for the revision of the Constitution that may be put forward, and to report what, if any, amendments of the Order in Council now in force should be made.'[76]

The announcement was received with surprise by the Ceylonese. They had, indeed, reason for surprise. The Government had just - a few months before - restated the Devonshire warning of 1923 that there would be no tinkering with the Constitution till at least 1929. The elite found it surprising that the Colonial Office, which in the past had persistently refused a Commission when they went on 'bended knee', was now offering one even without their asking for it.[77] The elite also had reasons for suspicion: they observed that Clifford frequently complained that the Governor was hampered by reductions of his powers in the existing Constitution; the bureaucracy was thought to be distressed that 'power was slipping out of their hands' as even minor items of expenditure had to go through the Legislative Council; the European community was said to hark back to the 'halcyon days when it had its own way'; and the European-oriented Times of Ceylon was seen to carry on a campaign to 'whittle down' the real though limited powers of the Legislative Council. Was the appointment of the Commission, the elite wondered, a huge conspiracy of the Government to 'put back the hands of the

clock' or an exercise calculated to 'register the preconceived Government opinions' - to 'clip the wings of the Legislature' and 'remove the power of the purse'?[78]

Suspicions were further aroused by the Government's and the European attitude to the form that the Commission's sessions should take. The Government-European-Times of Ceylon combination advocated in camera sessions for the Commission. The Ceylonese elite opinion and the Ceylonese Press favoured public sessions. Sir Hugh Clifford had already, in a secret despatch, requested secret sessions on the ground that

> 'the majority of the Ceylonese witnesses would find it impossible to state with any fullness or frankness any opinion they may hold which does not happen to be popular, and that even prominent officials would be seriously embarrassed in their relations with the public if they stated with any directness their experience of the working of the present system'.[79]

The Ceylonese elite's preference for open sessions seems to have stemmed more from suspicion of the bureaucracy than from real conviction; they thought that the 'reactionaries' in the Civil Service would use the 'cover of darkness' to do some 'stabbing in the back' and postpone the attainment of self-government.[80]

In any case, this climate of suspicion coupled with the Government's refusal to publish the despatch of Governor Clifford calling for a commission - which the elite suspected to be an execration of the Ceylonese - had convinced the elite that the Commission was indeed a 'Trojan Horse'.[81]

Nor was the announcement of the personnel of the Commission very reassuring to the elite. Early newspaper comments were not flattering. Lord Donoughmore, the Chairman, was said to be 'hardly known for his exceptional ability in the direction of Constitution-making; Sir Geoffrey Butler was a 'terrible' Conservative whose only claim to distinction was that he had written a book called "The Tory Tradition"; but what was intolerable about these 'two gentlemen' - Lord Donoughmore and Sir Geoffrey Butler - was that one could not expect anything more than 'strictly Conservative' and 'reactionary' attitudes from them, being two professedly Conservative politicians. Dr. Drummond Shiels,

the Labour Party Member of the Commission, was considered to be the worst choice: he was merely a 'professional photographer' who 'later graduated in medicine'; he was clearly not acceptable for his 'reported anti-Asiatic declarations in connection with the Edinburgh colour-bar issue';[82] a 'reactionary in the Labour cloak is capable of doing far more harm than one who is avowedly a Conservative'; they hoped, that 'even at the eleventh hour, a Labour Member more truly representative of the tradition of the Party will replace Dr. Shiels.'[83]

But a Ceylonese politician (A.C.G. Wijeyakoon) returning from England brought home a more optimistic picture of the Commissioners, to reassure the elite. Lord Donoughmore was said to be a very wise choice; a man of wide parliamentary experience and, what was most heartening, an 'Irishman to boot'; he is quite sympathetic towards the aspirations of the Ceylonese and the general opinion was that 'he will make an excellent Chairman'. Sir Matthew Nathan: had lived in the East and has experience not only of Crown Colony Government, but of administration in a progressive self-governing Dominion. Sir Geoffrey Butler: 'combined scholarship with a knowledge of practical politics'. Dr. Shiels: belongs to the moderate wing of the Labour Party; Wijeyakoon added: 'I could discover no trace of anti-Asiatic bias and he assured me that there was no foundation for any such suspicion.... He is a man of enlightened outlook who may be expected to do full justice to our case on its merits'.[84]

Actually, London could hardly have chosen a better team. When one considers their backgrounds and abilities, it seems as if they had been handpicked to face the knotty minority and other problems in Ceylon.

The Earl of Donoughmore, the Chairman, was Irish by descent and British by education and residence. As Chairman of Committees of the House of Lords he had had great experience in handling questions of a highly controversial nature and had acquired much tact in handling men. It was obviously for these talents of his that he was chosen from among the members of the Conservative Party by Edwin Samuel Montagu to accompany him on his visit to India for the purpose of consulting Lord Chelmsford and other officials in regard to constitutional

reforms. On the other hand, his Irishness and his deep understanding of the Irish issue could not but be useful in his understanding of Ceylon's problems. The distinguished Indian journalist, St. Nihal Singh, wrote of Donoughmore that,

> 'during 1921, when Lloyd George was talking of having "murder" in Ireland "by the throat" and the Earl of Birkenhead was declaring war to the knife against "Irish rebels", the Irish blood flowing in Lord Donoughmore's veins caught fire and he...joined hands with several others to bring warfare to end and have the issues outstanding between the Irish and British settled by consent'.[85]

Sir Geoffrey Butler was described as a 'brilliant and lovable personality, an accepted authority on International Law and probably more familiar than any other parliamentarian of his time with the structure and working of large and small legislatures in and outside the Empire'.[86] His Toryism and his democracy were equally strong and blended in an unusual harmony. In fact, he belonged to that group of young Conservatives who called themselves "Tory-Democrats".

Sir Matthew Nathan was said to be a 'Liberal of a type that had virtually disappeared'. His experience as the Governor of multi-racial Hongkong and his well known 'kindly disposition' fitted him for his new task in Ceylon.

Dr. T. Drummond Shiels, the only Labour Party Member of the Commission, was a socialist of the mild variety known as Fabian. He was reputed to have gone to the war 'with Edwin Arnold's Light of Asia in his pocket and came back with a Military Cross'. Though he was a Labour backbencher when he was appointed to the Commission, it was said of him that he would not remain there for long as 'he has the Scotsman's canniness, great social talents and an untiring industry;' and that 'if he has half a chance he will go very far'.[87]

There were yet some serious objections to the Commission. A section of Sinhalese elite opinion was genuinely concerned about new communal tensions that the Commission may generate; whatever the divisive nature of the Manning Constitution, they pointed out, the communities had been doing their best to 'pull together'. The 'gift horse', they feared, would only create a new theatre of discord.[88]

Indeed, long before the arrival of the Commission in the Island, a number of groups busied themselves with the preparation of memoranda setting out their case for reforms and representations. A pamphlet described the heightened political activity of the period:

> 'new theories and startling hypotheses are enunciated. New political parties and associations are springing into being like mushrooms. Existing organizations are whipping themselves up, in a last desperate flicker before the flame goes out'.[89]

Unwittingly, the Governor too helped the general scramble. Obviously in an attempt to conceal the embarrassment resulting from his refusal to publish his secret despatch - in spite of sustained elite agitation - Clifford, in a tour of the country painted a dazzling picture of the expected Commission and its role. That he over-did this, is obvious to anyone who reads his farewell speech to the Legislative Councillors:

> 'To my mind you should have a great deal more power. The idea that the power of the purse once given to you, Gentlemen, is going to be curtailed is an absurdity (loud applause). You ought to have a great deal more power, but power weighted with responsibility. (renewed applause) That is what I have recommended to the Secretary of State...If my suggestion is accepted, there is no reason why you should not have responsible government tomorrow. (cheers) The solution, Gentlemen, I feel is the one that I have ventured to put up. I am glad that the suggestions of mine,which after all, are made from my small parliamentary experience, will be sifted by an Imperial Commission composed of men of great parliamentary experience.'[90]

The Colonial Office was deeply embarrassed: the Governor's statements were described as 'ill advised' and 'a source of embarrassment to us ever since'.[91]

That the Governor's utterances increased the tempo of the political activity of the communities, there is very little doubt. To the Sinhalese elite this was good news. A leading Sinhalese Congressman commented that 'the present is the most momentous and critical period' in the history of Ceylon's political development; and they are 'not only within sight', but in fact,

> 'on the very borders of the Promised Land. Whether they would enter it or not depended on how they acted at the present juncture...the slightest weakening or wavering on their part would mean disaster. One false or hesitating step and the cause was lost'.[92]

The Governor's words, however, were to leave in the minorities a sense of deep foreboding - in the face of the impression created of an imminent transfer

of power and, perhaps, the British withdrawal after the Commission.

In truth, the Governor's part explains a great deal of the political hyperactivity and the now-or-never attitude of all the communities before and during the Commission. A leading Congressman aptly captured the mood of the moment when he said:

> 'there has been a quickening of activities due to the Special Commission now sitting in Ceylon. It reminds one of the "gold rush" in Africa or Australia. The day for the rush has been fixed and a great many people desire to peg their claims. The race is being run in earnest, each with his own thoughts to be first in the field and, naturally in the hustle there is some friction and some confusion; there is a good deal of jostling...!
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In the context of the great expectations that the Governor had offered - that the Commission was almost the ultimate tribunal of Ceylonese claims - the Commission was bound, at the very outset to become an arena of communal conflict. And this was exactly what happened. Claims and counter-claims by various elites were heightening communal tensions so much that some disturbed voices - from almost every camp - were even demanding the withdrawal of the Commission or the boycott of its sittings.[94] Indeed, with the imminent arrival of the Commission, in the tense atmosphere of meetings of communal groups and endless controversies in the Press and a platform, the gulf between communities seemed ever wider and deeper.

The Commissioners left England on 27 October 1927 and arrived in Ceylon on 13 November. They were to remain in Ceylon until 18 January 1928. During this period they held thirty four sittings for the purpose of taking evidence, the majority in Colombo; for the convenience of witnesses, however, sittings were also held at Kandy (Central Province), Jaffna (Northern Province), Batticaloa (Eastern Province), and Galle (Southern Province). They also made use of their time to visit 'famous temples, and historic ruins, schools and Colleges, hospitals and dispensaries, agricultural stations and irrigation tanks, workshops and factories'; an exercise which they hoped would enable them to establish 'the closest touch with all sections of the community'.

They resolved the disputed question of the method of enquiry - whether in public session or in camera - by agreeing to the general Ceylonese desire for

public sessions; but they also decided to depart from this rule 'at the request of witnesses' or when in their opinion 'the public interest dictated'. Only a few Government officials and a handful of Ceylonese witnesses actually made use of this concession. They examined 141 witnesses and delegates who appeared on their own behalf or in the interest of political, religious or commercial associations. Most of the witnesses supplied the Commissioners with written statements of their views, and a large number of letters and memoranda bearing on the subject of the enquiry were received from individuals all over the Island who either could not or did not wish to give evidence in person.[95]

The Commissioners decided too that except for the evidence given in camera - which was to be kept in the confidential archives of the Colonial Office - all other evidence would be made available for perusal by the public.

When the Commission began its sittings, it saw the depth of division. The Sinhalese elite case, articulated in different forms by different groups, could be expressed in the words of one Mahajana Sabha:

> 'the whole Island is at present politically ploughed and ready for sowing and it remains for the Honourable Members of the Commission to sow the seed of dissension by granting communal, religious or special representation, or on the other hand, to sow the seed of unity and progress by granting a system of self-government...[96]

The substance of the minority elite case was expressed by one Tamil group:

> 'communal interests have to be safeguarded for the success of the administration. The preparedness of the majority community to accept purely territorial representation on a population basis is no criterion that the country is prepared to accept it.'[97]

Here, in the uncompromising positions of the two camps, the Commission discovered the real impasse. Indeed, the Constitutional impasse they had come to resolve - the deadlock arising from the divorce of power from responsibility - would have seemed inseparable from the present one, the problem of the minorities, because the resolution of the communal deadlock would have been seen as a sine qua non to the resolution of the Constitutional dilemma.

At the very outset, the Commissioners seemed to recognize the minority question as the great human problem within the ambit of the wider, and perhaps

more theoretical, Constitutional question. Their initial message to the country revealed their concern; while being anxious to hear the 'whole story' of the communities, they expressed their solicitude regarding the 'higher welfare', the 'fuller national life' and the 'advancement of the people of this historic Island'.[98] Even the Government seemed to go along with the Commission's urgency with regard to the minority question; A.G.M. Fletcher, the Colonial Secretary, in his welcome speech to the Commission, laid special stress on the problem of the communities, though in an optimistic sort of way:

> 'we have our antagonisms, our divergenses of views, our conflicts of opinion; these are the attributes of an awakening self-expression and of a healthy political life, but underlying all, I think that you will find a secure foundation of loyalty, co-operation and goodwill. (hear, hear) - A good firm soil, Sir, on which to build. (hear,hear)'[99]

While the Commission was in session, a local analysis of evidence before the Commission suggested that the problem of the minority representation had been in the 'forefront of the discussion on constitutional reform' and that,

> 'the most difficult problem that will therefore confront the Commissioners must necessarily lie in devising a scheme, which while tending to eradicate the "cancer" will satisfy the communal claims and calm the communal apprehensions of the various communities.'[100]

The Commissioners agreed: the question, indeed, was a worrying one to them. Lord Donoughmore was to comment later that:

> 'a lot of our time has been taken up, and rightly taken up, by minorities asking for safeguards; and I am anxious to explore every safeguard.'[101]

A great deal of the communal heat generated before the arrival of the Commission seemed to subside as the sessions progressed. If part of the reason for the diminution of this tension was a certain catharsis the communities experienced in having their grievances sympathetically listened to, part of the reason, no doubt, was the unfailing courtesy and the sympathetic attitude of the Commissioners. A Ceylonese politician observed :

> 'its public sittings have been an education to the people... The invariable courtesy, patience and sense of humour displayed by the Commissioners under the most trying circumstances should serve as an object lesson to those in authority here.'[102]

They had, at least, made a good beginning in their search for a solution to a problem that seemed to defy a solution - the minority problem.

In the following chapters an attempt is made to understand the behaviour of the various ethnic, religious and caste communities, and especially of the new elite of those communities, under the special circumstances that obtained during the period under review. A number of questions with regard to the intensification of minority tensions had to be investigated: the impact of communal representation; the share of the administration; the place of the nationalist and religious revivals; the hopes and frustrations of the elites of the various communities and the exploitation by these elites of latent communal tendencies of their communities; and the impact or not on the communities of the announcement, the sessions and the Report of the Commission. And in a concluding chapter, an attempt is made to analyse the relevance of the Commission and its Report on the question of minorities in Ceylon.

NOTES

1. The Special Commission on the Constitution (1927-28); personnel: Earl of Donoughmore,(Chairman), Sir Matthew Nathan, Sir Geoffrey Butler and Dr. T. Drummond Shiels.
2. The Report of the Special Commission on the Ceylon Constitution, known as the Donoughmore Commission Report, Cmd.3131,1928,(hereafter referred to in the footnotes as D.C.R.), p.90.
3. We follow here the nomenclature of the period; 'indigenous' or 'permanent population' was used to designate collectively the Sinhalese,the Tamils, the Muslims and the Burghers to distinguish them from the Europeans and the Indians who were not considered to be native or permanent residents. Some nationalist groups had a terminology of their own: they made a distinction between traditional and non-traditional groups; in this grouping the Sinhalese, the Tamils and the Muslims were said to be traditional, while those groups, which came to be in the Island after the European intrusion in the 16th century - the Burghers, the Europeans and the Indians - were termed the non-traditional groups.
4. The figures are those returned at the Census of 1921.
5. The figures are those returned at the partial Census of 1931.
6. "Theravada" is the term used in Ceylon for that branch of Buddhism which elsewhere is known as "Hinayana" Buddhism,meaning the "lesser vehicle". Besides Ceylon, Thailand, Burma, Cambodia and Laos are of the Hinayana persuasion.
7. See infra Chapter I, p.
8. The Buddhist Temporalities comprised all the properties, movable and immovable, owned by the Buddhist temples. These properties were, for the most part, gifted by the Kings of Ceylon to the temples, for the maintenance of the temples and the priests.
9. Under Cola King Rajaraja I (985-1015) in 993, the invading army landed in the North and captured Anuradhapura; and later, in 1017, Ruhuna, where the Sinhalese King Mahinda V had established himself, was overrun by the Cola army. See C.W.Nicholas and S.Paranavitana, A Concise History of Ceylon, pp.157-8.

10. The south-western lowlands of the country and the central highlands receiving an average annual rainfall between 75 and 200 inches, are termed the Wet Zones; while the remaining areas of the Island, largely the low-lying plains to the North and the East, receive less rainfall and are termed the Dry Zone.
11. The Ceylon Tamils were so termed to distinguish them from the much more recently arrived Tamil-speaking people who came to be known as the Indian Tamils. For the sake of convenience, reference to Tamils without any specific indication to the contrary will be to the Ceylon Tamils. In this study, the Indian Tamils will be called the Indians.
12. E.B. Denham, Ceylon at the Census of 1911, p.232.
13. E.B. Denham, op.cit., p.238.
14. The use of the term "Burgher" for all Eurasians is often disputed by the Dutch Burghers of Ceylon. Vide infra Chapter IV for a discussion on the subject.
15. E.B. Denham, op.cit., pp.238.40.
16. For a study of the Sinhalese and Tamil Caste Systems in relation to the Indian System, see Bryce Ryan, Caste in Modern Ceylon; The Sinhalese System in Transition, pp.14-17,74-76; speaking of the 'mildness' of caste in Ceylon, Ryan observed that 'structural similarities or, more accurately, borrowings and transplantations from South India, are not reflected in a comparable rigidity in caste strictures and taboos. The very mildness of the Sinhalese taboos leads many contemporary Ceylonese to view the system as crumbling and of little practical significance today. There is, however, some doubt as to whether the Sinhalese have ever known the plethora of cultural differences, injunctions, taboos and discriminations which have been the most sensational parts of the Hindu social organization', Ryan,op.cit.,p.17.
17. H.W.Codrington, an authority on ancient land tenure in Ceylon, has pointed out the validity of the term "feudal" for the pre-Colonial Sinhalese society in his Andient Land Tenure and Revenue in Ceylon, p.20 ff; more recently,Bryce Ryan, following Robert Knox, Codrington and others, observes: 'the application of the term "feudal" to Ceylon is not to use a European concept for an Asian development only superficially similar. The linkage of obligation to land in reference to both secular and religious authorities was present in Ceylon as much as it was in medieval Europe. Gradations and classes of tenure show a surprising conformity with those of Norman England as do provisions of commutation of service, and payment of death duties etc. Ceylon had feudalism in every connotation of the term'. Bryce Ryan,op.cit., p.45.
18. Vide infra Chapter VI.
19. E.B. Denham, op.cit., p.177.
20. Vide Appendix 2, for a list of castes.
21. Bryce Ryan, op.cit., pp.16-21.
22. Ibid., p.4 ff.
23. Vide Chapter VI for a discussion on the depressed classes.
24. In Ceylon, for that matter in South Asia, the term community is often used to denote a people who 'share a common sense of identity' and consider themselves as constituting a unique and separate group, usually on the basis of a distinctive language,religion,social organization,or ancestral origin. The related term "communalism", therefore, refers to an'attitude which emphasizes the primacy and exclusiveness of the communal group and demands the solidarity of members of the community in political and social action'; see Robert N.Kearney, Communalism and Language in the Politics of Ceylon, pp.4-5.
25. The Portuguese and Dutch rule in the Island from 1505 to 1798 produced relatively modest social,economic and political changes in society in comparison with the major changes in the nineteenth century under the British.

26. G.C. Mendis, Ceylon Under the British, p.6.
27. In a stimulating discussion on the concept of "elite", T.B. Bottomore observes: 'the fresh distinctions and refinements which have been made in the concept of the elite call for a more discriminating terminology than has been employed hitherto. The term 'elite' is now generally applied, in fact, to functional, mainly occupational, groups which have high status (for whatever reason) in a society', T.B.Bottomore, Elites and Society, p.14.
28. The 'traditional elite' is what is sometimes described as the 'dynastic elite' or even the 'established elite'. Elite here is understood in the sense of a group of people who either directly or indirectly were in a position to influence very strongly the exercise of political power. The bhikku(Buddhist monk) although a political and social force in traditional times had lost much of his influence during the British period, and has thus been excluded from the present group of traditional elite.
29. John Davy, An Account of the Interior of Ceylon and of its Inhabitants, p.113.
30. In the pre-British period, the Kandyan Provinces had been administered by a hierarchy of officials headed by the great public officers of State - Adigars, Disavas and Ratemahatmayas. These officers were either chiefs of Provinces or groups of villages, possessing jurisdiction within their local limits or chiefs of departments with jurisdiction over persons dispersed in different districts or villages; these received no regular salaries, but were entitled to various emoluments attached to their office. These chiefs adminstered through a network of subordinate officialdom, headmen and minor headmen - koralas, atukoralas, vidanes, liyana-ralas and undiya-ralas. The military power was exercised through a separate grade of chiefs - the mudaliyars, muhandirams and arachis. This was the administrative system inherited by the British; see C.R.de Silva, Ceylon under British Occupation, 1795-1833, Vol.I, p.292 ff.
31. All Chief Headmanships in the Kandyan Provinces during the British period were filled by the Goyigama caste; in the Low-Country, however, a few exceptions were made in the appointments of a few others of wealth and influence, mainly from the Karawas, to Chief Headmanships. In the case of minor headmanships few appointments were made from non-Goyigama castes wherever there was a concentration of such castes. Even in the case of minor headmen, the Administration admitted that it was their policy to prefer a Goyigama when there was a mixture of castes in a locality. See Hugh Clifford to Secretary of State, 20 November 1926, C.O. 537,692.
32. Hugh Clifford to Secretary of State, 20 November 1926, C.O. 537,692.
33. The Ceylon Independent (hereafter referred to as C.I.), editorial, 29 June 1927.
34. A term popularized in Michael Young, The Rise of Meritocracy
35. An organization of new elite inaugurated in 1919 to press for reforms of the Constitution.
36. The Mahajana Sabhas (people's associations) were often local, voluntary associations with membership cutting across castes, although they had their origins as pressure groups to agitate on local problems, they were now increasingly claiming to speak on issues beyond the confines of the village and the district even on national issues.
37. See Chapter I, for a discussion on Kandyan separatism.
38. Sparked off as a disturbance in Gampola when Muslims (Moors) objected to a Buddhist procession with the beating of drums passing their mosque. Misinterpreted as anti-British riots by the Administration, Martial Law was declared and severe measures of repression resorted to; a number of innocent Sinhalese were summarily executed - this left for ever afterwards a memory of bitterness.

39. The Ceylon Daily News (hereafter referred to in the footnotes as C.D.N.), 12 December 1919.
40. Ponnambalam Arunachalam, On Our Political Needs, an address before the Ceylon National Association, later published as a pamphlet.
41. Hugh Clifford to Secretary of State, 20 November 1926, C.O. 537,692.
42. P.T.M. Fernando, The Development of a New Elite in Ceylon, with special reference Educational and Occupational Backgrounds, Ph.D. Thesis 1968 (Oxford).
43. H.A.J. Hulugalle, The Life and Times of D.R.Wijewardene, p.122.
44. B.H. Farmer, Ceylon: A Divided Nation, p.33
45. Commissioners: Lieutenant-Colonel W.M.G. Colebrooke and C.H. Cameron .
46. G.C. Mendis (ed). The Colebrooke-Cameron Papers: Documents on British Colonial Policy in Ceylon, 1796-1833, Vol.I, p.56.
47. Horton to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 23 November 1833.
48. McCallum to Earl of Crewe, 9 May 1909.
49. F.J. de Mel, 'Reform of the Ceylon Legislative Council', in Ceylon National Review, No.4, July 1907.
50. Arunachalam Padmanabha, 'Reforms of the Ceylon Legislative Council', Ceylon National Review, May 1908.
51. James Peiris to Earl of Crewe, Ceylon Sessional Paper II,1910, document 2.
52. Jaffna Association to Crewe, 19 May 1909.
53. The Ceylon National Association to Crewe, 10 April 1909.
54. The Chilaw district is the centre of the coconut industry, which was mainly in Ceylonese hands; the Association was thus dominated by these coconut planters of the area.
55. Chilaw Association to Crewe, 5 May 1909.
56. McCallum to Crewe, 9 May 1909.
57. Crewe to McCallum, 24 December 1909
58. G.C. Mendis, Ceylon Under the British, p.122.
59. See Chapter II, infra.
60. Milner to Manning, 18 August 1920.
61. Duke of Devonshire to Manning, 11 January 1923, Cmd. 1809.
62. Manning to Devonshire, 14 August 1922, Cmd. 1809.
63. Francis de Zoysa, Presidential Address, Ceylon National Association, 12 March 1923.
64. Reforms Despatch of Duke of Devonshire, 11 January 1923, Cmd. 1809.
65. Ceylon Reform Deputation to Secretary of State, 12 April 1923, Cmd.1906.
66. Debate, House of Commons, 11 August 1920.
67. Ibid.
68. The Round Table, 'The Ceylon Report', March 1929, p.299.
69. Proceedings of the Ceylon Legislative Council, (hereafter referred to as C.L.C.), 13 March 1923.
70. The Round Table, loc.cit.
71. Tamil Mahajana Sabha to Governor Manning, 11 May 1923.
72. See Chapter II, infra.
73. Hugh Clifford to Secretary of State, 20 November 1926, C.O. 537,692.
74. Ibid.
75. W.S. Ormsby-Gore, Minute, 14 January 1927, C.O. 537, 692.
76. D.C.R., p.3.
77. C.L.C., 21 July 1927, (A.F. Molamure).
78. S.W.R.D.Bandaranaike, speech at public meeting organized by Progressive Nationalist Party, C.I., 21 May 1927; Madras Hindu (article) cited in C.I., 19 April 1927; also C.I., 10 April 1927 (editorial), and C.I. 12 April 1927.
79. Hugh Clifford to Secretary ot State, 20 November 1926, C.O. 537, 692.
80. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, loc. cit.
81. C.L.C., 21 July 1927.
82. In early 1927 Indian students had been barred from dance halls and restaurants in Scotland. Speaking on a motion introduced by S.Saklatwale, in the House of Commons, Dr. Drummond Shiels,who represented one of the divisions of Edinburgh, expressed regret at the actions of proprietors

of the establishments concerned, but pointed out that 'they were running establishments for commercial purposes and if they found that by excluding certain people their purposes would be advanced they had a perfect right to do so'. However, he denied that the question of inferiority arose and mentioned examples of the friendly spirit shown by the people and the University towards Indian students. C.I., 4 June 1927.

83. C.D.N., 25 July 1927; C.I., 27 July 1927.
84. A.C.G. Wijeyakoon, interviewed in C.I., 12 September 1927.
85. St. Nihal Singh, 'Donoughmore Dyarchy for Ceylon', The Modern Review, October 1928, pp. 396-405.
86. Dr. T. Drummond Shiels in The Times (correspondence), 10 August 1938.
87. St. Nihal Singh, loc.cit.
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CHAPTER I: THE KANDYAN SINHALESE

The Reform Movement in Ceylon, which was led by the Low Country Sinhalese and Tamil elites, was beginning to be viewed by the Kandyan traditional elite as a threat to the status quo in the Kandyan Provinces and their prestige there. The aristocracy's opposition to the proposed reforms was already reflected in the inauguration, in 1917, of a hurriedly organized Kandyan Association to safeguard the interests of the traditional elite.[1] By 1919, the Governor, Sir William Manning, who had been harried by the pressures of the Reform Movement, had been prepared to use this conservative anti-reform element as a counterweight to the Ceylon National Congress platform. The Governor had suddenly turned 'friend and guide' to the Kandyan aristocracy in the face of the Congress demands for territorial electorates and a non-official majority in the Legislative Council. When a Congress deputation met Lord Milner, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Manning, in 1920, encouraged a separate deputation of Kandyans to demand separate communal electorates for the Kandyans on the ground that otherwise they would be 'thrown over' by Congress demands.[2]

The Reforms of 1923 were to disturb the traditional Kandyan elite even more. When, in the elections for the Legislative Council in 1924, a Low Country Sinhalese Karawa, W.A. de Silva, secured the urban seat of Kandy itself, the traditional Kandyan elite not only received a severe blow to their pride and self-respect but were also made intensely aware of the uncertainty of their position of leadership under modern democratic principles of popular representation. The political arithmetic that attempted to explain away the debacle did not prove very conclusive: in a very restricted franchise situation, based on educational and property qualifications, the Low Country Sinhalese, the Tamils and the Moorish traders who were richer and more educated - so it was argued - had outnumbered the Kandyan voters;[3] but whatever the explanation, no one, and certainly not the traditional elite, could have missed the deep

social significance of the event. The popular explanation as observed by Clifford, for the aristocracy's 'shock'on this occasion was that it had been due to the sudden realisation of the 'strangle-hold' of the 'stranger' on Kandyan territory.[4] This was a good enough explanation for the Kandyan leaders to go along with. But the further reason, a more private one, of the sudden loss of their own leadership to the emergent new elite would not have been absent altogether. The shock, however, was rudely to awaken the traditional leaders to the actualities of the situation and to the urgency of organised action.

The departure from the Island, in 1925, of Governor Manning, their friend and guide, was a deep loss to the traditional Kandyan elite. But the arrival of the new Governor, Sir Hugh Clifford, towards the end of 1925, marked a new era of gubernatorial friendship for the Kandyan aristocracy. As later developments showed, the new Governor was more than mere friend and guide but protector as well to the aristocracy during his regime in Ceylon; indeed, even after his departure from the Island as the Governor of Malaya, he was to continue to be their friend in attempting to influence the Donoughmore Commissioners in favour of their 'cause'.[5] The traditional elite were very fortunate indeed that in their time of need they had for Governor one who was a great admirer of high caste society and, perhaps, the most caste-conscious of all the Governors of Ceylon;[6] besides, here was a Governor who was well known for his long history of intense aversion to the new elite.[7]

A few weeks after the arrival of the new Governor, in December 1925 - and, no doubt, with his blessing - the famous Kandyan National Assembly was born. It was significant that the conclave of Chiefs met in the precincts of the Dalada Maligawa (The Temple Of The Tooth), where the most sacred symbol of Sinhalese Buddhism, the Tooth Relic of the Buddha was enshrined. This action of the Chiefs was their way of appealing to a traditional belief: that those who possessed the sacred Relic were the true masters of the land - a popular belief that had been utilized by the Sinhalese Kings and later by the British.

They decided to use the Temple as their headquarters and published their address as: Kandyan National Assembly, Temple of the Tooth, Kandy. The composition of the Assembly was very revealing. Although the Executive Committee was dominated by the representatives of the aristocratic families of the subcaste Radala or 'first-class' Goyigamas, a few well-to-do 'second-class Goyigama elite too were associated with them; the reason for this association, as will be discussed later, may be discovered in the involvement of this latter group in Buddhist Temporalities in which the Assembly was deeply interested.[8]

In any case, the Kandyan Assembly was a chieftain-class-dominated Goyigama caucus. None of the other castes were represented.

The aristocracy hailed the birth of the Kandyan National Assembly as the 'rebirth of the Kandyan Nation' and a sign of the Kandyan 'awakening from the slumber of a hundred years'; its aim which was not 'merely political' but 'mainly social and regenerative',[9] was very ambitious indeed; it was a carefully worked-out strategy of separate development for the Kandyan Provinces based on a comprehensive separatist logic.

The origin of the Assembly and its separatist doctrines might be attributed to a number of complex political, economic and social forces operating in Kandyan society; but it cannot be denied that it was particularly the transformation in the Kandyan social pattern - under the impact of modernising forces - that made its birth inevitable; the traditional elite had watched with dismay the genesis and growth of new elite power, which was a growing threat to their traditional position of dominance, and marked the slow erosion of their prestige monopoly in the Kandyan setting; the elections held after the Manning Reforms had only demonstrated the depth of this social transformation and the impairment of their traditional leadership position; the alignment of the new Low-country elite and the Kandyan low castes on the side of the new Kandyan elite was fast tipping the scales in the direction of the new group; and in a possible competitive situation against the new elite based

on a new democratic criterion of education, competence and merit, the chances of the success of the traditional elites would have been seen as hopeless. There was, thus, the need of a device, and a potent device at that, if they were to recover their old 'heritage'; placed as they were, the only logical alternative out of the depths of their despair seemed to be a search for salvation in separation. Given what was left of their own traditional power and prestige, in their own home-ground, saved from the meddling 'foreigner' (Low-countrymen) complicating the issues, competition could be less severe and chances of recovery of a pristine dominance a valid hope. Hence, the Kandyan National Assembly and the cry for separation.

There was a further reason, an economic one and a very urgent one too, to urge the traditional elite on their escape route to separatism. This was the thorny question of Buddhist Temporalities.

The Buddhist Temporalities comprised all the properties, movable and immovable, owned by the Buddhist temples. These properties were, for the most part, donated by the Kings of Ceylon to the temples, for the maintenance of the temples and the priests. Between the cession of Kandyan Provinces in 1815 and 1840 there were no substantial changes in the position of the temporalities. Honouring its undertakings given at the Kandyan Convention, the British Government had maintained the status quo with regard to these properties. Even the abolition of rajakariya - the ancient system of forced labour, conscripted on a caste basis - in 1832 did not affect their status: the lands of the temples were exempted from the operation of the Ordinance which abolished rajakariya and the tenants of those lands continued to perform their traditional services for the lands they held. In the 1840s, however, there developed in Ceylon an agitation to dissociate the state from Buddhism. Missionaries and Missionary Organisations had evidently been behind this agitation.[10] This controversy, which was to last a decade and during the tenure of office of four Governors,[11] led to the virtual severance of the connection between the State and Buddhism. But surprisingly, the position of these lands

remained, as far as management and use were concerned, almost unchanged: the compromise arrived at by the Pakington-Anderson settlement[12] in 1853 provided for a change in method of election and appointment of managers of temple properties; but the properties themselves were virtually left to be managed by the temples and for the temples.

This situation was to continue until a Commission under Sir Charles Layard, appointed in 1876, to investigate widespread reports of misappropriation, had recommended radical changes in the management of these properties. As a result, these properties were legally vested in lay trustees appointed by District Committees consisting exclusively of laymen. This arrangement was of course arrived at against the wishes of the Buddhist hierarchy. The bhikkus, in their turn, alleged that the temporalities had passed into the hands of 'professional trustees' who were the creatures of District Committees which again had become the monopoly of certain aristocratic families or "rings".

By the second decade of the twentieth century, the new elite in both the Low-country and the Kandyan Provinces had taken the lead in the agitation for the reform of Buddhist Temporalities. Obviously, the new elite's hostility to the traditional elite, who had virtually come to manage the temple properties, was behind this mood. In response to this growing agitation, the Government, in 1919, appointed a Commission under the Chairmanship of E.B. Denham, to investigate the workings of the temporalities.[13] The Commission observed:

> 'in 1876, the corruption and fraud was reported to be on the part of the priests, while in 1919 it is the trustees who are charged with misappropriating the temple revenues....The opinion of a number of witnesses was that even if the priests abused the trust they had far more right to do so than the lay trustees as they had at least some claims to the temple revenue as their own property.'

Indeed, the Commission made some startling discoveries regarding the state of these properties. Significantly, the Commission, which realised the extent of the family monopoly of these temple properties, reported that it was 'strongly of opinion' that the Government had a deep responsibility to

the Buddhists in this matter of their temple revenues and that the present 'disreputable abuse of temple properties by land speculators and land grabbers calls for immediate measures'.[14]

If the Administration hoped for an abatement of the agitation as a result of the appointment of a Commission, it was to be disappointed, The findings of the Commission and its exposition of the abuses was the signal for the stepping up of the campaign for reform. Actually the acute stage of the agitation began with the Report. It was a bitter battle of words: the traditional Kandyan elite who managed the temporalities on the one side and the new elite of the Kandyan and Low-country Provinces supported by the low caste organizations on the other.

The traditional elite had been carefully following the trend of the central argument of the new elite regarding the Temporalities: the ancient Sinhalese Kings, so the argument went, had endowed these temples not qua temples in this or that locality but as sacred shrines of the Sinhalese Buddhist population; they were gifts to all Sinhalese Buddhists - Kandyan and Low-country, high caste and low caste - and thus were not intended to be the monopoly of a privileged few; all Sinhalese, therefore, it was argued, should not only have an interest but a voice too in the running of these properties; the Legislation of 1889 and 1905 had not only been unjust in principle but sinful at its roots in delivering these sacred properties to a privileged clique. The Congress of Buddhist Associations (later to be known as the Buddhist Congress), inaugurated in 1919 - composed mainly of various new elite-dominated Buddhist Associations from the whole Island[15] - and the Mahajana Sabhas, provided the chief platforms for the airing of the variations of the argument.

There were, of course, weak areas in the reasoning: the assumption, for instance, that the temple properties were the 'birthright' of all the Buddhists was, at least, debatable; if these properties in the Kandyan Provinces had been the gifts of the Kandyan Kings to Kandyan temples and

shrines, where did the Low-country Sinhalese Buddhists come in? The Governor, for one, was to see the weak point: this argument, he said,

> 'is as gross an attempt to encroach upon their [the Chiefs'] rights as would be the advancement of a similar claim by the people of Spain, on the ground of their common Catholicity, to control the management of the Cathedrals of Portugal'.[16]

The Governor, of course, in his anxiety to support the Chiefs, did not stop to explain how the Chiefs came to claim the properties of the temples. The Chiefs, too, were to provide a variation on the Governor's theme: 'How illogical it would be', said P.B. Nugawela, the Diyawadana Nilame,

> 'to allow every Buddhist irrespective of nationality to have a say in the administration of our national property'. This would, he said, 'permit the Chinese, the Japanese, the Burmese, the Siamese, the Tibetans, the Manchurians or any other Buddhist to meddle with what must remain irrevocably the property of the Kandyan Buddhist alone'.[17]

Apart from the insinuation that to the Kandyan the Low-country Sinhalese was as much a foreigner as a Manchurian, the Chiefs' contention that these were the properties of the 'Kandyan Buddhist' would have been nearest the truth if ever there was one: but the crux of the problem was to ascertain the real representative or the spokesman for the 'Kandyan Buddhist'. At this late stage, amidst the confusion resulting from the transformation of Kandyan social structure, no one seemed certain. In days gone by, before the onset of these changes, the Chiefs had the last word: they spoke for everything Kandyan - religion, culture and the people - and everybody seemed to go along with them. Now there were the new elite in the picture, who called themselves the <u>true</u> representatives of the people and their aspirations, and who described the former as the 'so-called leaders' representing only their 'vested interests' and those of the foreigner'. Even in religious matters, the newcomers considered themselves the true representatives, since the 'former' leaders, they argued, had forfeited their rights to speak for a religion of which they had been the greatest destroyers, in that for over a century they had 'robbed the temples of their just claims and enriched themselves'.[18]

Questions that would have been impossible in the past were now being asked about the Chiefs: who made them the leaders of the Kandyans? Who made them the protectors of the temples? On whose behalf were they speaking? The Kandyans themselves were asking these questions. And here was the Chiefs' dilemma: they had to answer these questions; but in their answers they would aid the eruption of a seething volcano within Kandyan society itself. The traditional leaders were witnessing the basic contradictions of their own society that had now been brought to the surface. One thing would have become evident to them: that Kandyan society had changed.

In the early twenties, the Denham Commission had strengthened the new elite armoury with ammunition. Now, new and serious allegations of misappropriation, profiteering and 'fattening on temple lands' were levelled against the trustees of the temples, from Press and platform. The Chiefs were represented as 'grazing in the rich pastures of Buddhist Temporalities'.[19] A history of corruption had made the armour of the Chiefs very vulnerable, indeed; even their friend, the Governor, was compelled to admit that serious accusations

> 'wound the Kandyan Chiefs in a particularly vulnerable spot; for it must, I fear, be admitted that their control and management of the Buddhist Temporalities of the Kandyan Provinces have been, in far too many instances, hopelessly inefficient and often deplorably corrupt'.[20]

The pressure of these arguments and challenges had driven the Kandyan traditional elite to the wall. The next phase of the story of the Kandyan traditional elite - the psychology of their call for separation and their huddling together in the Kandyan National Assembly - must be seen in the context of their determination to salvage from the wreckage whatever they could of an area of traditional leadership, so near and dear, and even so profitable, to them - the Buddhist Temporalities.

The connection, however, between the K.N.A. (Kandyan National Assembly), its clamour for separation and the Buddhist Temporalities was not only

recognised all round, but was to become the greatest stumbling block in the path of the Chiefs' programme.

One of the first major acts of the K.N.A. was to draft a long memorial to the King, outlining their case.[21] The new Governor, Sir Herbert Stanley, was to present the Memorial to the Colonial Office with the 'trenchant and valuable' minute of the Government Agent of the Uva (Kandyan) Province, H.W. Codrington, 'an acknowledged expert on Kandyan history and affairs'.[22] Codrington's observations on the Executive Committee of the K.N.A. were very significant:

> 'It is a matter of regret' wrote Codrington, 'that the representation of Kandyan grievances which undoubtedly are felt by most educated Kandyans, has fallen to the lot of some person or other of the so-called Kandyan National Assembly.... Among the members of the Executive, apart from two from Uva (a Kandyan Province), I find no representative of any Kandyan District save Kandy. Even the rest of the Central Province is absent; let alone the North Western, North Central, and Sabaragamuwa Provinces. Of the six members of the Kandy District two are chiefly known to fame as Members, past and present, of the notorious Buddhist Temporalities Committee of Kandy and one of them is the well known Secretary of that body.... When I find the President to be the Diva Nilame, at present working in close co-operation with that Secretary, I am unable to place any great confidence in the "National Assembly", the more so as not long ago the Nugawela-Dissanayake combination under the "Kandyan Buddhist Assembly" proposed to Government an amendment of the Temporalities Ordinance, by which the existing abuses were to be perpetuated and reform made as difficult as possible. The object of that proposal was to secure the power of the existing people who are exploiting the temples. I must fear that the object of the present petition is not much more unselfish'.[23]

The new elite did not miss the connection either; their reaction was one of ridicule and sarcasm, and leading personalities of the K.N.A. were not left out of the barrage of raillery and badinage. 'Why is it', queried one

> 'that the chief office bearers of the Assembly are relatives of the Chief Headmen as well as temple trustees? Nugawela Disawe [the President of the K.N.A.] as the chief lay officer and custodian of the keys of the Maligawa [Temple of the Tooth] holds more valuable temple properties in trust than any other man in the Island and his youthful sons are affluent Chief Headmen. Ratwatte Disawe is the trustee of a temple whose properties are almost as vast as those of the Maligawa. Most of the other office bearers are also the relatives of the Chief Headmen or temple trustees who have not scrupled to fabricate evidence to prove that they have a mandate from the masses'.[24]

The motives of other K.N.A.men such as P.B. Ratnayake and P.B. Dolapihille were also explored in a similar fashion.[25] There were others who sought the

motives of the K.N.A. generally. One opinion was that the Kandyan Chiefs in the K.N.A. were attempting an 'undisturbed spoliation' of temple lands free from the 'vigilant eye' of the Low-country Buddhists.[26] The insinuation was of course that the K.N.A.'s chief motive for separatism was the temporalities, separatism allegedly being devised as a way out of Low-country-Buddhist agitation regarding the manggement of these properties by the Kandyan leaders. Another opinion was that 'no sooner [sic] the Chiefs discovered' that there was a consistent demand for 'root and branch reorganisation of the Headman System and the temporalities', they 'became alarmed and hurriedly formed an association to safeguard their threatened privileges'.[27]

It is, however, not to be imagined for a moment that those who campaigned for the reform of Temporalities and those who probed the motives of the K.N.A. - the new elite of the Kandyan and Low-country Provinces and the low castes - were altogether disinterested parties. The low castes, of course, may not have (in fact they could not have) hoped to gain any share of the benefits: in their case, it seemed more an attitude of bitterness against a privileged class who reaped all the benefits all the time; a speaker at a low caste-dominated association said:

> 'we remember what the ancesters of the present Kandyan Assembly members did to us...they trampled on the masses and gloated over their sufferings ...if the management of the Buddhist Temporalities were to be given into the hands of these Chiefs, it would be like giving all that you have to the Bahirawa - the gnome who swallows up all treasures'.[28]

The tone of bitterness was unmistakable.

With the new elite, however, it was different. Hopes of benefits seemed to lurk behind their agitation for the temporalities; even the particular brand of reforms some of them advocated, for example their suggestion that the function of 'protection' of these properties should be handed over to the mahajana sabhas, suggested the existence of interested motives in their agitation. The new elite - especially the Low-country variety - could not have been altogether unaware of the possibilities of the exciting treasure-trove that was the Buddhist Temporalities.

It was in the nature of this unhappy area - the struggle for temporalities - in the history of Kandy, that no motive however dark or ugly could be ruled out from the thinking of any of the main actors. It was also in the nature of this sad chapter of the Kandyan story that the party for whose benefit the Temporalities were originally intended - the bhikkus and their temples - were barely mentioned.

This is not to deny, of course, that there were disinterested people around. Indeed, there were. It is only that their voices seemed to have been drowned in the sound and fury of argument and counter-argument that went on. There were men from both camps - fervent Buddhists all - who thought that these properties had really been abused in the past but that it was still not too late to 'protect them from cupidity'; and they were anxious to see that these were used for the purposes for which they were intended and even, perhaps by diligent development, made to bear 'a fair share of the financial burden of Buddhist education' - in these days of a greater demand for education and of competition.[29] In other words, their argument was, that instead of these Temporalities being a bone of contention within the Buddhist camp that they should become a source of unity for all Buddhists for the greater glory of Buddhism and the welfare of the Buddhist population as a whole.

Having isolated and evaluated the two main reasons that led to the separatist tendency of the Kandyan traditional elite - firstly, their need to invent a device to regain their fast-eroding position of leadership in Kandyan areas, and secondly to confine the advantages of the temporalities to their own closed circle - it must now be shown how the K.N.A. proceeded from there. A study of the intense agitation they kept up, and the numerous Memoranda they presented to the Donoughmore Commission, reveals a brilliantly worked-out strategy and a powerfully presented case for separate treatment of the Kandyan Provinces; four significant steps of their strategy can be identified:

(a) To demonstrate that the Kandyans had been and were a separate nation, a separate people - not to be mixed up with the Low-country Sinhalese.

(b) To show that this notion of separate nationhood had not only been recognised but guaranteed by the Kandyan Convention of 1815,[30] but fundamentally distorted in the unification, in 1833, of the Kandyan Provinces with the rest of the Island.[31]

(c) To produce a catalogue of grievances - said to be the outcome of the rejection of the Convention of 1815 and the amalgamation.

(d) To work out a remedy: self-government for the Kandyan Province under a federated Island.

The Kandyan traditional elite realised that if separatism were to be tenable and credible they had to make a cast-iron case for a strong Kandyan identity; this, of course, entailed a detailed exercise in demonstrating the difference between the Kandyan and the Low-country Sinhalese. In the numerous Memoranda submitted to the Donoughmore Commission and in the evidence before the Commission, the K.N.A. never ceased to insist on the difference; the division, they argued was not a mere territorial one, as is often supposed, nor even a schism born in historical circumstances but one based on essential ethnic and racial grounds. Probing even the haze of legend, they saw the Low-country Sinhalese ethnically allied more to the Dravidian Tamil races than to the Kandyans: the nucleus of the Low-country Sinhalese and Tamil nationality being derived from the ancient Naga race - the fact that some sections of the Low-country Sinhalese of the Western sea-board spoke Tamil was said to support this contention - whereas the Kandyans were said to be a 'pure race' descended from the Yaksas of an ancient age.[32] An aspect of the exercise was a determined overemphasis of the distinction. The difference was said to be an unbridgeable gulf: that Low-countrymen were more than mere 'foreigners' in the land, but 'real enemies' of the Kandyans and their aspirations.[33] They probed recent history for justification for this animosity: their history, they said, had nothing to show save the terrible outrages of the Maritime Sinhalese and the Tamils in the Kandyan lands, outrages 'placed side by side with which the German barbarities in Belgium pale into utter

insignificance;' it was their view that at a time when the study of local history was spreading as never before that the differences and hatreds would only be heightened and the gulf immeasurably widened.[34]

On the other hand, the K.N.A. saw the 'alleged similarities' between themselves and the Maritime people to be only skin deep and shallow; a 'common dialect' (the Sinhalese Language) and a 'superficial agreement on religion' (Buddhism) was all that they were said to have in common; but then, they argued, how many widely differing nations possessed the same language and the same religion.[35]

In their search for authorities to 'prove' their identity and their separateness from the Maritime Sinhalese, they resorted to copious quotations from European writers on Ceylon; an exercise, perhaps, to impress the European Members of the Donoughmore Commission. They found, for instance, in Marshall[36] and Henderson[37] reference to the Kandyan 'nation' and Kandyan 'people' In the context, however, these quotations did not seem to go the lengths that the K.N.A. claimed - ethnic and racial differences - although they did speak of their distinguishing qualities and their general desire to be treated separately. The K.N.A. even unearthed some samples of Government documents to support their 'nationhood'; they discovered, for instance, references, in 1859, to a call for a reform of marriage laws by 'Chiefs and others of the Kandyan Nation' and the Queen's 'appreciation of the action of Her Kandyan Subjects' to reform their 'national customs'.[38]

If the Kandyan separatist Movement was bent on a course of demonstrating division, the new elite groups of both Kandyan and Low-country Provinces were determined to do just the opposite, viz. to demonstrate that this division was a fallacy. The Sinhalese, they said, had been and were one race. George E. de Silva, a leading politician in Kandy, declared that no amount of talk by interested groups, native or foreign, could effect a gulf in the ranks of the Sinhalese race; whatever the seeming division, it had been created by 'outsiders' and not the Sinhalese themselves and was a recent

development. Here, de Silva had a strong historical argument: in the first census of 1827, under Governor Barnes, and even up to 1901, the Sinhalese had been registered as one race, it was only in 1901 that an 'outsider' , Ponnambalam Arunachalam (a Tamil) as the then Registrar General, had decided to register the two sections of the Sinhalese separately. De Silva also argued that from 1833 when appointments of native Ceylonese began to be made to the Legislative Council, the Sinhalese as a race had been represented by one Sinhalese Councillor; it was Lord Stanmore, in 1889, who suggested a separate seat for the Kandyans, as a measure of convenience. So that the real responsibility for the division was said to rest on 'outsiders'.[39] The history of the Island, a Mahajana Sabha declared, did not point to any division other than one which was 'purely territorial', that some were 'settlers on the hills' and others were 'settlers in the Maritime Privinces'; an assertion which was at least arguable because of the specifically Kandyan laws and customs which were in existence.[40] Apart from the absurdity of the subdivision of the Sinhalese race into two different sections, a leading Kandyan argued, the word 'Kandyan' itself was a creation of the Europeans and there was not even an equivalent for it in the Sinhalese Language.[41] Another memorialist argued that the word 'Kandyan' was a legacy left by the Portuguese, who merely coined it to classify the people of the Kande Uda Rata or hillsmen.[42] This, of course, was no argument at all, because although 'Kandyan' might have been coined by the Europeans, Uda-Rata minissu (Up-country people) were obviously in existence to be so named by the Europeans. The racial subdivision, a Kandyan Bhikku asserted, was the 'artificial' creation of a few Kandyan leaders and a 'division, is observed, if observed at all, among not more than five per cent of the population'; the venerable bhikku was prepared to say that it was the 'conviction of the Sangha' that the two sections of the Sinhalese were one and undivided in race notwithstanding minor cleavages.[43] This was obviously a private view of this bhikku and it is doubtful if the leading nikayas (religious orders)

of Kandy would have agreed with him.

Were the new elite, then, to deny all differences between the two sections of the Sinhalese race? There were differences, indeed, they admitted, but they were neither essential nor unbridgable ones, but merely superficial differences, which were, doubtless, due to the fact that the Kandyan Provinces came under European rule at a later stage in the Island's history; Western education and progressive ideals had permeated the interior some time after the Maritime Provinces had begun the process of change; the 'gradual but steady process of levelling up', however, was at work and it was only a matter of time before differences disappeared altogether.[44]

It was pointed out, too, that in any case this attempt to prove racial subdivision was an exercise in hypocrisy, as most of even the members of the Executive Committee of the K.N.A. were not convinced of Kandyan superiority and had actually found Low-country wives and were 'connected' by marriage to Low-country Sinhalese families.[45]

While searching for a sure foundation for their separatism the K.N.A. found one in the famous Kandyan Convention of 1815. Knowing British sensitivity to any talk of injustice and unfairness, the K.N.A. men could not have been altogether unaware of the bargaining potential and the psychological value of a 'solemn treaty' that was said to have been 'cruelly violated'. The Kandyan Convention, they said, was not a 'treaty of subjugation' nor even one of cession; it was a contract of 'equals with equals and a compact of one sovereign state with another' just like the 'Scotch Convention of 1707 and the Irish Convention of 1801'. If Scotland did not become a mere 'appendage of England and remained a free and independent people' after her Convention, they argued, why should Kandy feel differently after a similar Convention? The document, they reasoned, was, thus, an international one whose interpretation should be governed by well-recognised principles of international law; herein, again, was the fundamental difference between the position of Kandy vis-a-vis the rest of the Island: while the Low-country had surrendered,

Kandy had merely 'substituted one ruler for another'; and where the 'Low-country had to beg, Kandy could claim'.[46]

It is in this context that the amalgamation of the Kandyan Provinces with the rest of the Island, in 1833, as a result of the Colebrooke-Cameron recommendations, was seen as a fundamental violation of the Convention and a breach of trust. Their contention was that the Convention had contemplated a separate Kandyan nation having paramount rule over a definite portion of territory and that, in the merging, the Government had permitted 'considerations of expediency to outweigh the moral obligations to the Kandyans'; and had thus been 'indifferent' to the fact that their rights were infringed, interests prejudiced and progress retarded.[47]

They were careful to direct their argument at an area where the British could be most touchy: Britain, they complained, cannot abrogate a compact unilaterally, retaining at the same time all the advantages she gained under it; it is difficult to believe, they added,

> 'that she who fought Germany to vindicate this very principle, the sanctity of treaties and the inviolability of pledges will disregard her contractual obligations as regards us without doing great violence to her much advertised sense of right'.[48]

These K.N.A. views, however, did not go unchallenged. The young Jesuit historian, Father S.G. Perera (a Low-country Sinhalese), kindled a furious fire of controversy in January 1927, by his lecture at the Colombo Young Men's Buddhist Association on the "Rise and Fall of the Kandyan Kingdom". There were two main sections in his lecture. First, there was a historical section in which he argued that Kandy was not the seat of the ancient Empire and that the suzerainty of the Kotte Kingdom[49] over Kandy till the sixteenth century was a historical fact; indeed, even the capital of the Up-Country Kingdom of Udarata was not Kandy but Gampola - Kandy becoming the capital only in recent times. In the second part of his lecture he dealt with the problems of a more recent period, particularly with the implications of the Kandyan Convention which in its historical perspective he concluded to be 'by now a dead letter'.[50]

The K.N.A. answer to these arguments was more an emotional outburst than a coherent reply: the lecturer was said to be a 'historian who is a Catholic extremist', as for his opinions 'neither the Kandyan nation nor the British Government will come forward to pay Father Perera the fee he deserves'; and the conclusion: 'hear the sentence passed on us, ye Kandyans, and tremble! That treaty by which our forefathers preserved for us the rights we should have in the land for whose safety they, many and many a time, sacrificed their lives by the thousand, that document so sacred to us is a scrap of paper and no more'.[51] In the light of the ensuing controversy taken up by D.B. Jayatilake, D.R. Wijewardene and others, it might be said that the historical sections of Father Perera's thesis remained almost uncontested - although these were distressing revelations in the context of Kandyan separatism. The second section, on the Kandyan Convention , however, did not seem to have convinced very many. Although some very strong reasons had been adduced to doubt the applicability of the Convention in the contemporary period, to have asserted categorically that the whole Convention was 'by now a dead letter' was, to say the least, bordering on presumption.

But Codrington, a Roman Catholic himself, agreed with Father Perera; he observed that the K.N.A. when speaking of the Convention had a habit of being 'discreetly silent' about the Great Rebellion of 1817-1818 when the only Districts remaining loyal to the British were the 'lower part of the Ratnapura District, the present Kegalle District and two small divisions near Kandy' and where ' every Chief of note with the exception of Molligoda Adigar was in rebellion'. It was Codrington's view that even though Governor Brownrigg did not repudiate the Convention in his 'remodelling' of the Administration by the Proclamation of 1818, the Kandyans themselves had broken the Convention by an 'almost general rebellion' a fact which was 'at that time recognized and acted upon' by the British Government; and, indeed, the Convention had been 'to all intents lost to view until unearthed by an industrious Civil Servant'.[52]

There was another strong argument against the Kandyan case: the question was asked why the Kandyans had hardly raised their voices of protest, all these years, while the Administration was virtually disregarding the Convention even to the extent of creating a union with the rest of the Island? The K.N.A. reply to this was not very convincing: the silence, they said, was due to the fact that they had been 'gagged and paralysed by Martial Law which was imposed on them for three years after 1818 and a good many times after that and any protest against the Government would have meant death or exile.'[53] But Clifford's sympathetic explanation sounded more plausible: that the Kandyans were prepared to accept this position as long as the Colonial Government retained an effective control over the Legislature and the Executive; but now the position has changed radically, in that the Kandyans are required to accept a perpetual minority position among a 'hostile majority'.[54] But Clifford did not try to explain why only the caucus in the K.N.A. were anxious to avoid being merged in the larger nationality of Ceylon and why a fair segment of Kandyans, mainly the new elite and the low caste groups, would not want to go along with the K.N.A. The explanation, however, seemed evident: the Chiefs desired to remain masters in their own land away from the gathering power of the new elite in the Low-country and in a competitive position with the new elite in Kandy.

Ironically, the very attitude of the Government provided the Kandyans with an argument: the Government had never officially repudiated the Convention and down the years the Administration had honoured some of its provisions.[55] Even during the period under discussion, Clifford was, to say the least, ambivalent: in his secret despatches he maintained that the Kandyan invocation of the Convention was 'clearly not sustainable';[56] but in his Memorandum on the Kandyan Question, written at the request of the Chiefs - and clearly meant for publication - he pleaded that he was not 'competent to express an opinion'.[57] The Administration was, moreoever, either unable or unwilling to make a definite statement on the state of the Convention; when a Councillor tabled a question

in the Legislative Council regarding the Convention, an embarrassed Government sought refuge behind a procedural wall: the Councillor was told that the 'question was inadmissable under Rule 12, sub-section (d), that a question shall not ask for an expression of opinion or the solution of an abstract legal question or hypothetical purpose.[58]

There was no doubt that Kandyans suffered many hardships. The chief reason for their disabilities might have been the late start of Kandy on the road of modernization, and all that went with it, like education, in an age of competition; but the Kandyans, at least the K.N.A., placed the blame fairly and squarely on the British policy of unification and the consequent opening of the flood-gates to 'foreign invasion' of Kandyan territorities; the result, they said, had been giving the more sophisticated, more educated and more intellectually energetic Tamil, Moor and Low-country Sinhalese an unfair advantage over available jobs, land and education in the Kandyan Provinces.

The 'encroachment' was claimed to have gone on so unhindered that in the case of available jobs, for instance, they estimated that over ninety per cent of Government jobs in Kachcheries, Police, Sanitary, Public Works, Agricultural and other Departments in the Kandyan areas were filled by non-Kandyans; and that in the higher Civil Service there was not a single Kandyan Civil Servant serving in the Kandyan areas.[59] Even if the figures were exaggerated, the Governor agreed that it was indeed a scandalous situation to have almost all the Government Departments in the Kandyan Provinces manned mainly by non-Kandyans and that it was the duty of the Government to ensure a 'large proportion of posts' to the Kandyans and that the local posts in the Civil Service should be 'reserved to the Europeans and Kandyans'.[60]

Their greatest complaint, however, was about the problem of land. They calculated that they had been 'cheated' of over a million acres of Kandyan lands by the Government in the guise of the Waste Lands Ordinances of 1840

and 1897 and the Temple Land Registration Act of 1856; the land thus acquired had been sold by public auction to land speculators from outside. Their allegation was that land used by Kandyans for periodic cultivation and as pasture lands for their cattle and for village expansion had been declared as waste land, and acquired and sold by the Government. Indeed, the fact that 100 per cent of cocoa, 100 per cent of cardamoms, 94 per cent of tea, 65 per cent of rubber and 37 per cent of coconut - the main commercial crops - of the total output of the Island were produced in the Kandyan provinces,[61] demonstrated the extent of Kandyan lands owned by capitalist forces which generally controlled these enterprises; and as these were said to be 'capitalist immigrants' - European and Low-country planters - Kandyan small farmers were said to have been uneeremoniously hustled into enclaves amidst vast expanses of 'estates'. It was argued that, in the open competition for land, the poor Kandyan had not the faintest chance of competing with the 'financial superiority' of the 'foreigner'. Even the Administration was compelled to admit that the Kandyan small farmer had been 'more or less exploited' and that 'lands that should have been earmarked for the exclusive use of the villagers to be utilised by them for temporary cultivation of food crops were incontinently sold to land speculators.'[62]

The K.N.A. had a solution to the land hunger for the Kandyans: that all available Crown land be parcelled out among the Kandyans who should be precluded in perpetuity from alienating it to any non-Kandyans.

Lack of educational facilities in the Kandyan Provinces was a further grievance. Kandyan education was said to be 'overlooked' although Government revenue was mainly derived from the Kandyan Provinces; the fact that four-fifths of the education vote was expended in Low-country and Tamil areas was argued to be a sign of the insensitivity of the Government to the plight of the Kandyans.

But in the K.N.A. analysis, the basic disability was their having to remain a minority amidst a Low-country majority and having to be ruled by a Legislative

Council in Colombo where the dominant element was not merely 'alien but also inimical to the progress and freedom of the Kandyan Provinces'.

The situation was said to be intolerable when 'third parties which were neither Kandyan nor British' were legislating for the Kandyans, governing them under foreign laws (Roman-Dutch Law on which the Low-country laws were based) while their own laws were replaced. The criminal aspect of these changes was said to be the failure of the Government to 'consult the nation [Kandyan] through their Chiefs' specially guaranteed in the Convention.[63]

These were, of course, grievances of all the Kandyans. But it was significant that the anti-separatists even among the Kandyans were not prepared to see them in the same light as the K.N.A. They saw the K.N.A. complaint as an attempt to use the argument of Kandyan disabilities to strengthen their case for separation and thus to monopolize the prestige, power and profit of all the top jobs which they could not hope to achieve in open competition; in other words, though the new Kandyan elite, too, experienced the hardships and desired their redress, they were not prepared to accept their articulation by the traditional group whose motives were suspect. But the fact was that the grievances were there and they were making even the ordinary Kandyan more and more impatient with the outsider in their land. This mood was, indeed, a powerful weapon in the hands of the K.N.A. and they were determined to use it.

And there was no denying, too, the Administration's sense of guilt: Codrington, for one, admitted that it was 'difficult not to feel sympathy' with the Kandyan villager.[64] And Governor Stanley was also deeply concerned over the condition of the Kandyans and was demanding radical measures for their amelioration.[65]

But during all this argument and counter-argument a clear picture of the tragedy of the Kandyan villager emerged. A Kandyan leader from the K.N.A. was to draw attention to the depth of despair: the Kandyans were so poor, he said, that their women have even begun 'to sell their honour' and 'prostitution was on the increase'.[66]

The K.N.A. discovered a panacea for all these Kandyan ills: self-government for the Kandyan Provinces under some form of federal government for the whole Island. The reasoning itself was brilliant: they argued that there were three distinct sections of the native population of the Island, more or less geographically separated - Kandyans in the five central provinces; the Low-country Sinhalese in the two maritime, Western and Southern provinces; and the Tamils chiefly occupying the Eastern and Northern provinces; and that the history, the customs and traditions of these sections are of considerable divergence. Unity can therefore be maintained without hardship to any one section only by a grant of some sort of self-government in each of the sections while united under a federal government for the entire Island. The advantages of the scheme were said to be obvious: that no one section would be treated unjustly nor would any one of them be in a position to dominate either politically, socially or otherwise, any of the other sections. This solution, they predicted, would 'at one stroke' wipe away the existing ills in the country generally and in the Kandyan areas particularly; and such a scheme, moreover, would provide an opportunity to the British Government to fulfil its solemn obligations undertaken in 1815.[67]

The K.N.A. demand was to create a storm of protest: it was described as a 'retrograde step' and a conspiracy of the Kandyan aristocracy, whose avowed object was to 'carve up' Ceylon into so many watertight, social and economic compartments for their own selfish ends. The anti-separatists argued that the consolidation of the entire Island into one political and economic entity had proceeded too far for the 'Mrs Partingtons of Kandy to hold back the tide.'.[68] The Mahajana Sabhas were the noisiest: for them the Chiefs were the 'advocates of disruption' and the Kandyan National Assembly the 'anti-national Assembly'.[69]

There were, however, those who subjected the separatist argument to cold logical analysis and went further in furnishing positive arguments in favour of the existing union; in an evaluation of the results of the political

union of the country for a century, D.R. Wijewardene, for instance, discovered that the 'advantages which have accrued to the Kandyans from the incorporation more than outweigh the limited resources of an entity such as the Kandyan Kingdom was at the beginning of the last century'.[70]

Wijewardene's constitutional agrument was even stronger; to create a federal unit of the Kandyan Provinces was said to be against all accepted principles of constitutional development, since a federal union to be of any value must arise by the establishment of a closer tie between elements which were earlier distinct, not by the division of members which have been hitherto more closely united. In any case, the Sinhalese community was argued to be small enough not to need or warrant any breaking up; there could be no justification for creating differences where they do not now exist, simply because the Up-country and Low-country Provinces came under British rule at two different stages of the Island's history.[71]

The K.N.A. tried hard to pacify the anger of Kandyan new elite with honeyed statements of what they had in mind, 'friendly federation' but 'not splendid isolation' vis-a-vis the rest of the Island; or with emotional appeals to Kandyan sentiment: 'need we to forget that we are Kandyans to live in friendly intercourse with other communities;'[72] but some dark intentions verging on the sinister did not seem to be absent: the opinions of the Secretary of the K.N.A., for instance, were very revealing - 'why not disenfranchise the non-Kandyans in Kandyan areas as their votes help to vote in non-Kandyans?'[73] Governor Stanley who was to sense this dark mood was to 'hazard a personal expression of opinion' when he said -- and this was obviously directed to the Commissioners - 'while the invasion of the Kandyan country by large and increasing numbers of non-Kandyan Sinhalese may perhaps be regarded as giving the Kandyans a claim to some special protection, the invaders have also legitimate claims to political representation which should not be ignored'. Perhaps it was this very suspicion of K.N.A. intentions that prompted the Governor to declare categorically that 'federalism is no

solution'.[74]

An analysis of the K.N.A. agitation brings out some very revealing aspects of the Chiefs' strategy to gain their ends; firstly, a concerted effort to palaver the British and secondly, an effort to depict the whole exercise as an issue between the Kandyans and the non-Kandyans and to play down the internal struggle between themselves and the Kandyan new elite—low caste combination.

Time and time again, in their agitation they emphasized their loyalty to the King and the British Government. Their logic seemed only natural: the British, after all, were still the rajahs in the land and the present Commission's view in their regard could be decisive.[75] So they set to work. The Governor was the first to receive a boost: as far as the K.N.A. was concerned the Governor was 'not just a Governor but a Viceroy of our King';[76] all their annual sessions opened with the unfurling of the Union Jack and two resolutions to match: 1) 'This Assembly expresses its loyal adherence to the King of the Kandyan Kingdom, His Britannic Majesty.' and 2) 'This Assembly resolves that the 2nd of March be declared a national holiday in the Kandyan Kingdom in commemoration of the election of the British Sovereign as the King of the Kandyan Kingdom.'[77] The Secretary of the K.N.A. even declared that their 'loyalty to the British should extend to another 2500 years at least'. This type of talk calculated to impress the British was not to the liking of the 'nationalist' new elite; their disdain was to be expected: this extraordinary love for the British was described as the 'most staggering conundrum' of the age, and the 'patriotism that contemplates twenty five centuries of British tutelage - a state of things not contemplated even by the most hopeful of British Imperialists', was said to be a perfect example of the 'slave mentality' and the 'selfish blindness' of the K.N.A. leaders.[78]

The K.N.A. efforts, however, to depict the struggle as one between the Kandyans and the non-Kandyans was to be frustrated by the Kandyan low castes.

The K.N.A. perhaps, never bargained for the stiff opposition of the low castes under the tutelage of the new elite. The two powerful non-Goyigama associations - Maddyama Lanka Mahajana Sangamaya and Sri Lanka Jatika Sangamaya - were to be the thorns in the side of the K.N.A. In numerous memoranda to the Donoughmore Commission and innumerable meetings in the Kandyan Provinces they took a strong position against the K.N A. and its separatist demands. Too long, they argued, had they been pushed around as 'dumb driven cattle'; and while they were not prepared any more to tolerate the 'absolute and despotic sway' of the Chiefs who had held them in 'subjugation' and 'perfect ignorance' for centuries,[79] they were neither prepared to retrace their steps to a period when 'no man could walk on the roads wearing a banian (vest) for the fear of the Chiefs.' They remembered the days when they were not able to send their children to school for the fear of the 'big people' of the village who told them 'don't worry, man, in your next birth when you should be born in our caste things would be alright.'[80] It was also significant that the bhikkus of the largely non-Goyigama Amarapura nikaya were active leaders of the low castes against the K.N.A.[81] When the K.N.A., through the headmen, collected signatures for a separatist petition, the low castes complained to the Attorney General of the 'coercion employed by the K.N.A. through the village headmen to obtain signatures from villagers and even school children.'[82] In a series of public meetings they also protested at the use of the Dalada Maligawa for K.N.A. meetings as it belonged to 'all Kandyan Buddhists.'[83]

The K.N.A. was concerned, indeed,at the intensity of low caste feeling. At first, they tried their hand at wooing them: the form of the Government of the future, they declared, would not be 'a revival of the old aristocratic oligarchy' but one 'without any distinction of caste or creed' where the 'people will be the real political sovereign'.[84] Later they tried their hand at pacification: overtures were made to the Maddyama Lanka Sangamaya 'with a view to promoting unity amongst ourselves in the interests of the Kandyan

people'; the invitations were turned down by the low castes.[85] A leading Kandyan promised before the Donoughmore Commission that 'even the leaders of the Maddyama Mahajaha Sabha (sic)' who have recently become 'restless' will be included in the new Kandyan set up 'as they are also Kandyans'.[86]

The K.N.A. was bitter, indeed, that the low castes were working in close co-operation with the Ceylon National Congress which was posing as the champion of low caste aspirations; the Congress was accused of 'engineering' and controlling the low castes and attempting through them a 'peaceful penetration' of Kandyan territory.[87]

No reconciliation seemed possible. Centuries of social tension between the all-powerful high caste leadership and ill-used low castes had left a huge chasm between the two groups. Now the relation between inequality and grievance seemed so real to the lower castes. No soft words seemed capable of bridging that gulf. Whatever their own 'nationalism', the low caste organisations were the greatest opponents of separatism and the most fervid advocates of a united democratic Ceylonese nation.

Governor Clifford - though he liked to play down opposition to the K.N.A. - admitted that the Chiefs were not altogether representative of Kandy in that 'by a large section of the Kandyan people, too, this movement (national union) is in some degree welcomed, inasmuch as it tends to strengthen them against their Chiefs and to encourage them to claim a measure of independence undreamed of by their forbears'.[88]

Indeed, for Clifford the whole Kandyan problem was rooted in caste conflict; his interpretation was that the separatist tendency of the Goyigama aristocracy in the K.N.A. was occasioned by a fear of the growth of non-Goyigama power - mainly Karawa power - in the Legislative Council and in the Kandyan Provinces. But what was more significant was Clifford's own attitude to the Kandyan question. If he had hard words for the Kandyan Chiefs, during his analysis, it was only that they had not fought hard enough and quickly enough while 'all other sections of the Ceylonese population were busy organising

more or less efficient machinery for the protection of their special interests and for the effective enunciation of their views and that they should have postponed action of any kind until the eleventh hour itself was well nigh spent'. Clifford's reference was evidently to the fact that Kandyans were not organized enough before the Reforms of 1924; but the fact that he wrote this in July 1927 - when the Commission was expected in the Island - could be interpreted as an invitation to the Kandyan leadership to get on with the preparation for the Commission. This interpretation in fact becomes reasonable when we realize that Clifford had decided to throw his full weight on the side of the K.N.A.; he argued that the fact

> 'that their protest is belated must not be regarded as evidence that it is not the result of very strong sentiment....I submit, therefore, that the views set forth in the Memorial [of the K.N.A.] cannot lightly be set aside as matters deserving little serious consideration...and the Government of Ceylon will, in my judgment, be guilty alike of injustice and unwisdom if it treats the views and claims of the Kandyans as negligible and thereby alienates and engenders a strong sense of grievance in a section of the indigenous population which is undubitably the most loyal in the Island'.[89]

When assessing this attitude, one could detect the Governor's temptation to use the separatist tendency of the K.N.A. to fit his own pet theory of a 'divided nation' and to employ it as a stick to beat the new elite whom he did not specially like. While blaming the British themselves for their 'slovenly habit to class the "Sinhalese" as a single section of the population as opposed to the Tamils', he considered the possibilities of the separatist tendency; he opined that,

> 'the admission of the Kandyan claims in this matter would deal a death-blow to one of the most cherished contentions of the Low-country Sinhalese politicians, who are never weary of reiterating, in defiance of all actualities, the theory that the extraordinarily heterogeneous population of Ceylon forms a united Ceylonese Nation'.[90]

To a 'nationalist' new elite with dreams of a nation state, Clifford's views would have been suggestive of ulterior motives; a Kandyan bhikku, for example, evidently referred to such motivation when he observed that the divisions among the Sinhalese which were only 'artificial' were 'to all intents and purposes sought to be perpetuated by the Executive Government'.[91]

Clifford was, perhaps, the last in a line of paternalistic Governors who refused to accept the reality of change; his determination to pamper a decaying institution like the Kandyan aristocracy seemed only the last ritual act of a high priest of an old order and it was, perhaps, his way of repudiating the emergent forces as a bad dream. His successor, the less sophisticated Stanley, who arrived in time for the sessions of the Donoughmore Commission, was to take a firm stand against the divisions of a country which, for a century at least, had been united. And with an attitude like that a change in course in British attitude and policy was to be expected. Indeed, with Stanley firmly on the side of unity, the Commissioner's final reaction to the K.N.A. could safely be predicted.

During the very sessions of the Commission, it became clear that only the K.N.A. - which presented its case as a group and through many individual spokesmen - was on the side of separation. The other groups - Low-country and Kandyan alike - opposed the move. Even if the Commission were prepared to ignore the evidence of Low-country spokesmen on the ground that their evidence was biased, it could not have possibly ignored the case of a number of Kandyan,mainly low caste, spokesmen who opposed the K.N.A. plan. And any further doubts of the Commission regarding the position it should take must have been removed by the position that Codrington was to take. Codrington, who loved the Kandyans and made it his life's work to study their problems and their history, and who was perhaps the Kandyans' best friend among the Europeans, was to stand firmly against separatism; he agreed that Kandyans should have more power in their own area,

> 'but not through those people of the Kandyan National Assembly', because, he argued, they 'are simply out to get power into the hands of these few people who are most of them trustees of the temples'.

But he was also prepared to caution the Commissioners of Low-country elite intentions:

> Sir G. Butler - 'Has Buddhist Temporalities anything to do with it /separatism/? That these fellows running the National Assembly are composed of trustees who had a guilty conscience and Low-country people coming up and trying to clean up their own business?'

Codrington - 'No. I think it is because of the Low-country people wishing to have a finger in the pie.'[92]

Indeed, during the very sessions, one could have gathered a fair picture of the Commission's assessment of the Kandyan situation. It was evidently one of ddep sympathy for the plight of the Kandyans, especially because of their being 'exploited' by 'outsiders' in their own land. But they too were obviously unimpressed by the K.N.A. demand that they be treated 'on the lines of Ulster';[93] in fact, the Commissioners referred to their own experience to imply that separatism would not do: the Scotsman Shiels observed that,

> 'we have highlanders who have very much the same history as the Kandyans. We have also lowlanders. There are much greater differences between them - even differences of language - than between the Kandyans and the Low-country Sinhalese and yet they are one country sharing the same history.'[94]

The Cornishman Butler had similar feelings:

> 'I myself am a Cornishman and we used to think of ourselves as completely separate from England but I cannot help feeling that it would not have been good for the Duchy of Cornwall if it had not been merged in the larger life of England.'[95]

The Commissioners' suspicions of K.N.A. ambitions did not seem to be any less real. The Irishman Donoughmore seemed to be almost thinking of the Ulster Protestant majority when he asked the K.N.A. deputation: 'Do you think that the Kandyan Legislative Council will be entirely dominated by the Goyigamas?'[96]

The Commissioners' Report appeared in July 1928. There was no doubt about the importance of the question in their eyes for they devoted a complete chapter of the Report to the Kandyan claim.[97]

In their Report they observed that the claim was supported only by the K.N.A., which was a 'recently constituted body which may be said to express the views and apprehensions mainly of the feudal chiefs and headmen'. The Commissioners, however, were not surprised by the K.N.A. demand: for, after all, it was 'natural' that this old guard 'should be suspicious of reform and that to their scandalised ears the language of its advocates should penetrate as strange and even treasonable jargon'.

The Commissioners' attitude to the historical argument for separatism - the validity of the Convention of 1815 and the invalidity of the amalgamation

of 1833 - was revealing. They did not propose to set themselves up 'as judges of events which have now passed into history' and which could 'well be left to the historian and the student' - whose views could anyway 'safely be predicted' as 'many and conflicting'. They were more concerned with the 'solid fact' that 'for almost one hundred years' the 'Kandyan Provinces have been merged for all administrative purposes with the remainder of the Island'. Their conclusion was that the 'time has long since passed' when an experiment in federalism could have been attempted without creating greater problems; and as the life of the nation is now 'closely interwoven' an attempt to dissociate with them would be 'criminal folly'.

The Commissioners were in no doubt that the separatist tendency was a result of the separatist logic fostered by the 'wholly pernicious' system of communal representation, which had created an 'ever widening breach between the communities' and had tended to obscure national interests in the clash of rival races'. But the Commission was deeply aware of its healing mission:

> 'it is our aim to do all that is in our power to encourage the healing of this breach, to promote the assimilation of the different races into a united and progressive people, and to stimulate the development of a national and not a sectional outlook'.

And they were in no mood to compromise this all important role of reconciliation:

> 'to turn our backs, in the case of the Kandyans, on the assimilating influences of the last hundred years would be wholly inconsistent with this aim; rather must we welcome and attempt to build upon them'.

They were, however, certain that with the extension of the franchise, which they proposed, with the increased facilities for education already under way and with greater involvement in local government the Kandyans will receive 'greater opportunity for self-expression'.

Although their notions of nation state, and perhaps Donoughmore's own Irish experience, prompted them to resist the Kandyan separatist claims, their solution did not seem to have left them very happy; indeed, it was evident that their determination to gloss over the Convention had left them with a sense of guilt. Nathan's comments on the draft on the Kandyan claim

are very revealing:

> 'they [the recommendations] seem to me not to do quite as much as is possible to placate the Kandyans in circumstances that are distasteful to many of them but which we cannot alter. Of course, no convention can outlast or has ever outlasted the main conditions under which it was framed, but there is no doubt we could have preserved more than we have done the chief provision of the Kandyan Convention, namely, that their Provinces should be ruled in the interests of and generally in accordance with the views of the Kandyans. The 1833 Constitution has led more and more to this provision being not only disregarded but practically reversed, in that outside people who were to be dominated by the Kandyans in their country are now put into a dominating position themselves. I do not think it can honestly be said that the Kandyans have ever accepted the situation although their protests have been ineffectual.'[98]

The K.N.A.'s first reactions to the Report were bitter indeed. The President of the Assembly summed up the general feeling: that England had 'cheated them of their country' and that their faith in the British had been shattered; but that they would not despair because,

> 'we are determined and we shall do all in our power, even though our skins and bones should dry up, to vindicate...our rights...which the Commissioners try to pass off so lightly.'[99]

But later, sober analysis prompted the K.N.A. to resolve to 'cooperate in working the Reforms, under protest, with the hope of winning the recognition of their Treaty Rights'.[100] This was in effect a willingness to turn a blind eye, at least for the moment, to their main demand for separate treatment; and a virtual recognition of the union. Indeed, this, perhaps more realistic,attitude was reflected in the statements of some leading Kandyans; Meedeniya Adigar, a leading Kandyan Chief, wrote to the Governor that,

> 'after consulting many of the Chiefs, the majority of the Kandyans, including myself, do not want a separate Kingdom. What we want is a safeguard for our ancient laws and customs and above all the preservation of our identity, which has existed from time immemorial'.[101]

The chief reason for this change of heart was evidently the new worrying element of Indian enfranchisement. Already during the sessions, the K.N.A. had been outspoken about its resentment of the large-scale Indian presence in the Kandyan Provinces, the objection being based mainly on economic and cultural grounds. But now, Donoughmore's extension of the franchise to the Indian labourer presented a new threat of the political 'swamping' of the

Kandyans as well. The K.N.A. leadership, which realised the hopelessness of their efforts to turn the tide of reform, would have seen in an alliance with the Low-country Sinhalese the only hope of stemming the Indian 'menace'. And here they could depend on the Low-country Sinhalese politicians who shared their antagonism to the Indians and their enfranchisement. Hence their decision to sink their differences and come together on a united platform against Indian enfranchisement.[102] The shared concern also explains the Kandyan behaviour, during this period, within the Legislative Council: in the long search for devices, in the moves and counter-moves and in voting behaviour, the few Kandyan members revealed remarkable rapport with the Low-country Sinhalese members; indeed, the Kandyans were prepared to break away from the recently-formed minority club to do so.[103]

The Donoughmore exercise was not without deep significance for the Kandyan social organisation in general. The sessions revealed the deep divisions within that society. For the first time, the high caste traditional elite had come face to face with the gathered anger of ill-used caste minorities among them. And chiefly by these minority efforts, the K.N.A. exercise in separatist politics had been shown to be a desperate last-ditch effort to preserve l'ancien regime.

If the K.N.A. missed the message then, the soul-searching that followed the failure of their efforts laid bare the roots of failure - the absence of unity in the Kandyan camp. And the revelation imparted to the leadership a sense of urgency to pursue a policy of reconciliation. No doubt the newly-gained political power of the minority castes - in the wake of the Donoughmore recommendations of universal adult franchise - and the need to entice the minority castes away from the Low-country embrace would have been seen as further reasons for reconciliation. A leading K.N.A. man spelled out this new thinking:

> 'what shall we do at this time of distress? We must not be discouraged. We must re-arrange our ranks. The disintegrating influences of a thousand years have broken up our ranks and are eating into our vitals. We must destroy the influence of caste...we must create a brotherhood

> in terms of absolute equality...Let us tear out of ourselves the traditional beliefs and practices, for is not the call of the country greater than all these? To do this we have to remove from the mind of those placed at a disadvantage their condition of mental slavery. Let the bond be one of heart, of common adversity, the common suffering which binds us heart to heart...not merely not doing bad but positively helping the weak, the poor, the wronged'.[104]

These were surprising sentiments indeed coming from a hardened aristocrat of the K.N.A. But they were significant. Only the impact of the Commission and the shock arising from the frustration of the separatist aims could explain the change. But with such sentiments of reconciliation within the community, Kandyan society could address itself to the urgent task of development.

NOTES

1. The Ceylon Daily News, (C.D.N.), 25 March 1919.
2. Governor Manning to Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, 30 April 1920, C.O.54,842; Congress Deputation: H.J.C. Pereira and D.B.Jayatilaka (both Low-country elite); the Kandyan deputation: T.B.L. Moonemalle, G.E. Madawela and J.A. Halangoda, met the Secretary of State on 22 June 1920; see P.T.M. Fernando, The Development of a New Elite in Ceylon with special reference to Education and Occupational Backgrounds, 1910-1930, D.Phil. Thesis, Oxford, 1968.
3. It was true that the Kandyan voters living in the municipal area of Kandy Town represented only 34.6 per cent as against a percentage of 32.1 Low-country Sinhalese alone; and that the latter were wealthier and more literate too was a fact, but this alone does not explain the enthusiasm demonstrated by the Kandyans themselves for the Low-country candidates during the elections; (source of statistics: Clifford to Secretary of State, 20 November 1926, C.O.537,692).
4. Hugh Clifford's Memorandum on the Kandyan Question to the Secretary of State, 26 July 1927, C.O.54,886.
5. A long (fourteen-page) Memorandum on the Kandyan Question written at the 'special request addressed to me by some of the leading Kandyan Chiefs', by Sir Hugh Clifford was sent to the Secretary of State, to be 'passed on' to the Donoughmore Commissioners. This document was written after his departure from Ceylon, from the Government House, Kuala Lumpur, 26 July 1927, in C.O.54,886.
6. See Chapter VI of this work. Clifford's understanding of all events and movements in Ceylon history as mainly an outcome of caste struggles and his general obsession with caste entitles him to be called the 'caste-conscious Governor'; his admiration for and sympathy with the aspirations of high caste society in Ceylon, mainly the 'good' Goyigama society cannot be missed by anyone who reads his long (137 page) despatch of 20 November 1926,C.O.54,692.
7. It is now almost certain that the Governor McCallum's despatch to Earl of Crewe (26 May 1909), which denounced the new elite, was actually drafted by his then Colonial Secretary, Hugh Clifford. Indeed, the new elite of the day did not doubt for a moment that this was Clifford's work - so much was he suspected of anti-new alite bias; vide P.V.J. Jayasekera, Social and Political Change in Ceylon, 1900-1919, Ph.D. Thesis, London 1970, for reasons to believe that Clifford was the real author.

When Clifford turned up as Governor, in 1925, the reception from the new elite was cool. The new elite-slanted Ceylon Independent wrote on the day of his departure: 'when he /Sir Hugh/came into the country the people did not exactly receive him with open arms. There were painful memories that forbade empty platitudes'. (editorial, 25 March 1927). Even his long secret despatch of 20 November 1926 - which the Colonial Office refused to publish - was a railing against the new elite, (C.O.537,692).

8. The original Executive Committee: D.B.Girihagama (President), M.B. Galagoda (Basnayaka Nilame, Hon.Secretary), P.B.Kotugoda, F.Taldena, T.S.M.Sundaranayake,T.B.Kobbekaduwa, J.A.Halangoda and P.B.Dissanayake; these were also the signatories of the Memorial to the King, 20 April 1927, C.O.54,886. The Executive Committee of 1927-28: President - P.B.Nugawela Disawe (Diyawadana Nilame); Vice-Presidents - A.Godamune, J.A.Halangoda, F.Taldena, L.B.Bulankulama, Hon.Mr.T.B.L.Moonemalle (L.C), H.Ellawela; Advisory Board - Hon.Mr.P.B.Rambukwella (L.C.), J.C.Ratwatte, T.B.Panabokke, T.B.Kobbekaduwa; Hon.Joint Secretaries - M.B.Galagoda, W.Talgodapitiya; and Committee Members - T.B.M.Bandaranaike, W.Gopallawa.
9. P.B. Nugawela, Presidential Speech, annual sessions of K.N.A., C.I., 29 January 1927.
10. For a more detailed study of the influence of missionary bodies on the question of state's relationship with Buddhism during the period 1840 to 1855, see K.M.de Silva, Social Policy and Missionary Organisations in Ceylon, 1840-1855, pp.64-137.
11. The Hon.J.A.S. Mackenzie (1837-41); Sir Colin Campbell (1841-47); Viscount Torrington (1847-50); and Sir George Anderson (1850-1855);
12. The controversy regarding the connection between the State and Buddhism tended to die down with the compromise solution worked out between the Secretary of State, Sir John Pakington, and the Governor, Sir George Anderson. The important aspects of the settlement were: the handing of the Tooth Relic to the representatives of the Buddhists; and the election of managers of temporalities by a system of electoral colleges. The complicated question of the Acts of Appointment - which involved the state-Buddhism relationship - was solved by an arrangement to issue simple certificates of a purely declaratory form recognizing the validity of the election, see K.M.de Silva, op.cit., pp.103-137.
13. Personnel of Commission: E.B.Denham (Chairman); J.H.Meedeniya (Kandyan); T.B.L.Moonemalle (Kandyan); and W.A.de Silva (Low-country Buddhist). Interim Report and Report of the Commission, Ceylon Sessional Papers X (1922) and XII (1923), and XXIV (1920).
14. Ibid.
15. Presidential Address (M.H.Jayatilaka) and resolution (C.Jayaweera), Matara Sessions of the Buddhist Congress, C.I.,29 December 1926; and Presidential Address (Francis Molamure), Anuradhapura Sessions of Buddhist Congress, The Ceylon Morning Leader, 28 December 1927.
16. Clifford to Secretary of State, Memorandum on the Kandyan Question, 26 July 1927, C.O.54,886.
17. P.B. Nugawela, Sessions of the K.N.A., C.I., 31 January 1927.
18. The Sri Lanka Jatika Sangamaya - a mainly Durayi-dominated association of Kandyans - to the D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VII; and the Udarata Jatika Sangamaya - similarly composed as the above association - to the D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VII.
19. W.K.Jinadasa (a Low-country Sinhalese Buddhist) to the D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.IV; and C.I., 8 March 1928 (column: "Et Cetera").
20. Clifford to Secretary of State, 26 July 1927, C.O.54,886.
21. K.N.A. Memorial to the King, 20 April 1927, C.O.54,886.
22. Stanley (Governor) to Secretary of State, 19 September 1927, C.O.54,886.
23. Ibid., enclosure (Codrington minute of 11 August 1927).
24. W.K.Jinadasa to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.IV.
25. C.I., 20 October 1927; and C.I., 11 November 1927.

26. Dumbara Mahajana Sabha - a sabha affiliated to the Ceylon National Congress, mainly made up of non-Goyigamas - to the D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.V.
27. W.K. Jinadasa to the D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.IV.
28. D.S. Perera, at a joint meeting of Maddhyama Lanka Mahajana Sabha and Sri Lanka Jatika Sangamaya, C.I., 23 February 1927.
29. C.D.N., 19 October 1927.
30. On 2nd March 1815, at the Audience Hall in Kandy, the Governor Sir Robert Brownrigg, received the submission of the Kandyan Chiefs; the Kandyan Convention of the same date was signed on behalf of the British by the Governor and on Kandyans' behalf by ten leading Kandyan Chiefs. It was in the form of an agreement between the British Government and the Kandyans. Significant among the twelve articles of the document were articles four and five. Article four vested the Kandyan sovereignty in the British Crown to be exercised through the Governor of Ceylon; but it also assured the Chiefs and subordinate headmen (lawfully appointed by the British Government) of the rights and powers of their respective offices; and all classes of people were promised the safety of their persons and property with their civil rights and immunities, according to the laws, customs established and in force among them. Article five declared Buddhism inviolable and promised the protection of its rights, ministers and places of worship. (Ceylon Government Gazette, 6 March 1815).
31. A Commission of Enquiry was appointed in 1829 to investigate the affairs of the Island. In their Report, the Commissioners - William Colebrooke and Charles Hay Cameron - recommended the abandonment of independent establishments for the Maritime and Kandyan Provinces, because this policy was said to be 'impolitic' and was a hindrance to assimilation of Kandyan and Low-country people. In 1833, implementing the recommendation of the Commission, the Kandyan Provinces were amalgamated with the Maritime areas. The separate government and with it whatever separate existence the Kandyans had enjoyed since the annexation was at an end; see G.C. Mendis (Ed.), the Colebrooke-Cameron Papers, Vol.I, p.XXIII.
32. P. Dolapihilla, The Kandyan Claim, to the D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.IV; and K.N.A. to D. Commission, 9 January 1928, D.C.W.S.,Vol.IV. Dolapihilla's attempt to search for ancestry for the Low-country Sinhalese and the Kandyans in Nagas and Yaksas respectively, seems convenient but of doubtful scholarship. There is no evidence of even the existence of these races. Paranavitana (Archaeological Commissioner and leading student of Ceylon's ancient times) says:
    'there is no evidence that there were in Ceylon peoples of an advanced culture at the time the Indo-Aryans settled in it. The Yaksas figuring in the Vijayan legend and the Nagas mentioned in connection with the visits which the Buddha is believed to have paid to this Island, are clearly referred to as superhuman beings, not as races of men. There is no justification to assume that they were races of men with a superior civilization'.
    S. Paranavitana, in Nicholas (C.W.) & Paranavitana (S), A Concise History of Ceylon, p.26.
33. Dolapihilla, ibid.
34. Dolapihilla, ibid. The reference was, of course, to the Portuguese wars waged against the Kandyans with varying measures of success and failure; the Low-country Sinhalese had actually aided the Portuguese in these campaigns and the bitter memory of this fact was ever present in the minds of the Kandyans and served the present agitation for separate treatment for the Kandyan Provinces.
35. P. Dolapihilla, ibid.

36. H. Marshall, Ceylon, p.222ff.; see also Rajadhaniya (the organ of the K.N.A.) 10 August 1928.
37. R. Henderson, History of the Rebellion in Ceylon during Lord Torrington's Government; see also Rajadhaniya, 10 August 1928.
38. K.N.A. to the D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.IV; and Rajadhaniya, 1 November 1927.
39. George E. de Silva, during meeting of the Kandy Mahajana Sabha, 10 November 1927, C.O.54,886.
40. Dumbara Mahajana Sabha to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.V.
41. A.F. Molamure to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.IV.
42. W.K. Jinadasa to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.IV.
43. Sri Ratnajoti, (High Priest of Ratnapura, a Kandyan), to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VI.
44. D.R. Wijewardene to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VII.
45. Dumbara Mahajana Sabha to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.V; C.I. 10 January 1928; examples: Hon.Mr.T.B.L.Moonemalle married to Low-country Goyigama lady, John Halangoda's sister-in-law married to Low-country Goyigama gentleman, Albert Godamune and his sister married to Low-country Goyigamas, Meedeniya Adigar and his daughter married to Low-country Goyigamas.
46. W. Talgodapitiya, Secretary,K.N.A.,at a Mass Meeting in Kandy,C.I., 7 October 1927 and 24 October 1927 (correspondence).
47. K.N.A. to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.IV.
48. W. Talgodapitiya, loc.cit.; amd K.N.A. to D. Commission,D.C.W.S.,Vol.IV.
49. Kotte near Colombo became the Capital under Parakramabahu VI (1412-1467). His successors up to 1597 reigned from Kotte. It was, however, true that ten years after the death of Parakramabahu VI the Island was divided into three kingdoms, among which the suzerainty of Kotte over the other two was only nominal; see Nicholas(C.W.) & Paranavitana (S), A Concise History of Ceylon, p.316.
50. Father S.G. Perera, at Colombo Y.M.B.A.,12 January 1927,C.I.,13 January 1927; see also correspondence in C.I., 7 January 1927.
51. U.B. Dolapihilla, C.I. 29 January 1927.
52. H.W. Codrington, minute of 11 August 1927, included in Stanley to Secretary of State, 19 September 1927, C.O. 54,886.
53. W. Talgodapitiya, loc.cit.
54. Clifford to Secretary of State, 26 July 1927, C.O.54,886.
55. The Dalada Maligawa was directly controlled by the Government (priests appointed and festivals managed) till at least the 1840s; in 1856 there was an ordinance for registration of temple lands within the Kandyan Provinces; and in 1870 there was the Service Tenure Ordinance for Kandyan Provinces.
56. Clifford to Secretary of State, 20 November 1926, C.O.537,692.
57. Clifford to Secretary of State. 26 July 1927, C.O.54,886.
58. Proceedings of the C.L.C., 8 March 1928 (a question by A.F. Molamure); see also C.I., 9 March 1928.
59. K.N.A. document the Kandyan Claim, D.C.W.S., Vol.IV; K.N.A. evidence before D. Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.IV.
60. Stanley to Secretary of State, 19 September 1927, C.O.54,886.
61. Based on the Ceylon Blue Book for 1926.
62. Hugh Clifford, Land Policy (pamphlet), 21 March 1927, C.O.54,886.
63. K.N.A. to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.IV.
64. H.W.Codrington, minute, 11 August 1927, C.O.54,886.
65. Stanley to Secretary of State, 19 September 1927, C.O.54,886.
66. K.N.A. evidence before D. Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.IV.
67. K.N.A., Memorial to King George V, 20 April 1927, C.O.54,886
68. C.I., Editorial, 11 January 1927, and C.I., 14 January 1927.
69. Kandy Mahajana Sabha - dominated by Ceylon National Congress forces and presided by George E.de Silva,a Congress stalwart and opposed to K.N.A. strategy - and Dumbara Mahajana Sabha - another mahajana sabha which was affiliated to the Congress - to the D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.V.

70. D.R. Wijewardene - a Low-country Sinhalese married to Kandyan aristocracy used his newspaper (owned and edited by him) the Ceylon Daily News to oppose Kandyan separatism - to D. Commission, D.C.W.S.,Vol.VII.
71. Ibid.
72. P.B. Nugawela (President,K.N.A.) 3rd annual sessions of K.N.A. reported in C.I., 11 January 1928; and W. Talgodapitiya (Secretary,K.N.A), C.I., 24 October 1927.
73. P.B. Ratnayake (of the K.N.A. Executive), C.I., 11 January 1927.
74. Stanley to Secretary of State, 19 September 1927, C.O.54,886.
75. C.I., 24 October 1927.
76. C.I., 25 December 1926.
77. K.N.A. annual sessions, C.I. 26 January 1927.
78. C.I.,editorial, 11 January 1927.
79. P.M. Athukoralage to D. Commission, D.C.W.S.,Vol.V; and Sri Lanka Jatika Sangamaya and Udarata Jatika Sangamaya (two mahajana sabhas of non-Goyigama - mainly Wahumpura,Rada and Durayi - of Kandy) to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VII.
80. D.S. Perera, at a joint meeting of Maddhyama Lanka Mahajana Sangamaya and Sri Lanka Jatika Sangamaya (both non-Goyigama associations), C.I., 23 February 1927.
81. Ibid.
82. Maddyama Lanka Mahajana Sangamaya (resolution) to Attorney General, 11 November 1927, D.C.W.S., Vol.5.
83. Kandy Bauddarakshaka Sabha (resolution), C.I. 24 January 1927.
84. W. Talgodapitiya,(Secretary,K.N.A.), C.I., 7 October 1927.
85. Secretary, K.N.A.,to Secretary Maddyama Lanka Mahajana Sangamaya, 31 October 1927, D.C.W.S., Vol.V.
86. Meedeniya Adigar to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.V.
87. K.N.A. evidence before the D. Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.IV., and Rajadhaniya, 1 November 1927.
88. Clifford to Secretary of State, 20 November 1926, C.O. 537,692.
89. Clifford to Secretary of State, 26 July 1927, C.O. 54,886.
90. Ibid.
91. Sri Ratnajoti, High Priest, Ratnapura, to D,Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VI.
92. Evidence of H.W. Codrington in camera before the D. Commission, Nathan Papers.
93. A.G.M. Fletcher (Colonial Secretary),minute on a K.N.A. deputation, which the Colonial Office passed on to the Commissioners, 18 August 1927, C.O.54,886.
94. Dr. Shiels to A.F.Molamure,during latter's evidence,D.C.O.S., Vol.IV, pp.23-40.
95. Sir Geoffrey Butler to K.N.A. during its evidence,D.C.O.S.,Vol.IV,pp.1-23.
96. Ibid.; though the K.N.A. deputation was to deny Goyigama dominance in the proposed Kandyan state, the question itself was indicative of Donoughmore's suspicions.
97. Chapter VI, "The Kandyan Claim" in D.C.R., pp.103-108.
98. Sir Matthew Nathan to Sir Alexander Clutterbuck, returning the draft on the Kandyan Claim, Nathan Papers.
99. Godamune, at public meeting of K.N.A., C.I., 15 August 1928.
100. K.N.A., special session, (resolution 3),30 September 1928,C.O.54,892.
101. Meedeniya Adigar to Governor Stanley, 28 September 1928, C.O.54,892.
102. Public meeting, 16 February 1929, where the chief speakers were: W.A. de Silva (Low-country Sinhalese) and A. Godamune (of the K.N.A.), in C.O.54,894.
103. See Chapter III; The Indians, for more particulars on this question.
104. Godamune, during public meeting, C.I., 15 August 1928.

CHAPTER II: THE TAMILS

Governor Manning had been very generous to the Tamils in the Reforms of 1923. To a Tamil minority of 532,535, roughly eleven per cent of the population, he had given eight seats[1] while the Sinhalese majority of 3,232,737 (Low-country Sinhalese 2,065,430 and Kandyan Sinhalese 1,167,307),[2] roughly sixty-seven per cent of the total population, was given only sixteen seats - the Reforms increasing the Tamil representation almost three-fold while the Sinhalese representation remained virtually constant.

Manning's successor, Sir Hugh Clifford, during his short regime, was to refrain from any meddling in the Sinhalese-Tamil political cauldron. The fact was that he had hardly any scope in this field, as his predecessor had secured a package of reforms which the Colonial Office had warned was to last at least until 1929. But his views on Tamil-Sinhalese relations were significant. In his view the 'split' was something that had to occur sooner or later as the Tamils had always suspected the Sinhalese of 'designs to dominate the whole political situation by sheer weight of numbers'; while the Sinhalese had been,

> 'resenting the reluctance of the Tamils to account themselves merely a minority section of a united "Ceylonese Nation", and are apprehensive concerning the results which the competition of frugal and diligent Tamils is likely to produce upon the standard of living and the prospects of employment of the educated portions of the Sinhalese community.'[3]

It was not only that the split in the Ceylon National Congress had to be; there was not even much hope for a future unity. The Governor even found the very fact - which indeed it was - that the Tamils were a diligent, enterprising, industrious and ambitious people, standing in the way of unity; he observed, for instance, that the Tamils were cleverly trying to undercut the Sinhalese because their spokesmen in the Legislative Council,

> 'are for the most part strong advocates of reduced salaries for men in public employ, partly because rates of pay which, to the Sinhalese appear to be quite reasonable, are regarded by them as exorbitant, partly because they hope, by forcing stipends down to a point that will still attract Tamils but will repel Sinhalese and Burghers, to secure the employment of an increasing proportion of their countrymen.'

The Governor did not even place much faith in the Tamil attempts, after 1924, to work in harmony with the Sinhalese in the Legislative Council; indeed, he saw

some dark motives behind the exercise. Their real motive was said to be to forge an alliance with the Sinhalese to get rid of the European, as,

> 'they cherish the expectation that Tamil frugality and efficiency will win the day in a Ceylon from which the formidable competition of Europeans has been well nigh eliminated'.[4]

While he found the Sinhalese to be the real villain of the piece, at the conclusion of his analysis of the Sinhalese-Tamil conflict, he also found in the events a case in point for his pet theory of a 'divided nation'. The fact is, he argued,

> 'that in spite of all talk to the contrary on the part of Sinhalese politicians, communal feeling runs strongly in every section of the heterogeneous population of Ceylon and that even the men who are loudest in their denunciations of it are au fond animated by it, and only condemn it because the numerical strength of their community renders its recognition disadvantageous to their particular circumstances and interests'.[5]

When the Commission arrived in 1927, the majority of the more important Tamil organisations that appeared before it were those which had been inaugurated in 1921 - after the Tamil withdrawal from the Ceylon National Congress; although they had remained inactive for a time they were now revived in time for the Commission. But there were a few others, too, which were organised in preparation for the Commission.[6] Strict ideologies or hard and fast rules did not seem to have separated these organisations as the same political elite were associated with a number of them at the same time. But in general it might be said that with the exception, perhaps, of the more moderate All-Ceylon Tamil Conference- which was prepared to accommodate Sinhalese elite opinion on a number of issues such as self-government for the Ceylonese - the rest were of the more conservative Tamil opinion.[7]

The Tamil elite case before the Commission was significant on many counts. No more was it an argument in favour of 'political freedom for a nation in travail' or of 'self-government for the Ceylonese' as in the days of Sinhalese-Tamil unity. Even the central issue of Tamil agitation had changed: immediately after the breakaway from Congress they had led the minority groups in a vehement defence of communal representation; since however Manning enshrined communal representation as a guiding principle in the 1923 Constitution, the need for its defence had been removed. Now, the burning issue before the Tamils was to

preserve Manning's gifts. Their strategy before the Commission was, thus, to cling tenaciously to the over-representation they had achieved in the 1923 Constitution. Indeed, amidst all the variety of deputations and opinions, the Tamils seemed agreed on one point and it was their message to the Commission: that there was hardly any need to tinker with the Manning Constitution and that the status quo was good enough for them.

The Tamils made a strong case to retain their advantage. One line of argument was based on the 'practical isolation' of the Tamil provinces from the rest of the Island; these areas were said to require greater representation as the non-Tamil Councillors were either ignorant about or did not appreciate the 'requirements of this part of Ceylon'.[8] Their main justification, however, for the over-representation of the Tamils was the Manning argument based on 'balance of power'. Indeed, the very formulation of their argument seemed a re-arrangement of quotations from Manning's despatches on the subject. Their contention was that the present arrangement had assured a 'correct balance' between the various races of the Island so that no one race, not even the majority Sinhalese, could 'preponderate' in Council. Any scheme, they warned, calculated to disturb this racial equation would be guilty of aiding the 'condemnation' of all smaller communities to'political impotence'; besides, a disturbance of this balance would 'lead to racial jealousies that will mar the smooth and ordered progress of government'. Their contention, they argued, was supported also by the Indian precedent: whereas, after all, the over-representation of the Muslims was founded on a British argument based on considerations of political expediency and necessity and not necessarily on numerical strength.[9] In any case, they concluded, the over-representation of the Tamils was a 'concession to their political importance'and was now a fait accompli, a 'settled fact that should not be reopened.'[10]

The Sinhalese elite, on the other hand, would not agree. They complained of the unreasonableness and the anomalous nature of Tamil over-representation. They made a bitter attack on the motivation of the whole Manning scheme.: it was, they said, the deliberate use of communal representation to maintain an 'artifi-

cial balance of power and one calculated to divide and compartmentalize Ceylonese Society; the Scheme, they alleged, had resulted in the 'encouragement in the body politic of habits of political thought', and worse, of habits 'of political action'which had become fatal to the advancement of the country in the direction of self-government.[11]

The Sinhalese elite argument against Tamil prerogatives though couched in terms of 'injustice to the majority community' and 'undemocratic practice' could not altogether conceal their private ambitions and fears; most of the Sinhalese political elite who argued before the Commission had their own agricultural, commercial and economic interests and were often described as 'capitalists';[12] in truth, some aspects of their argument revealed their motives. One argument, in particular, was specially revealing: over-representation, it was averred, would 'enable some communities to derive an unjust measure of advantage from the general revenue and it would also result in vesting in a minority of the population a disproportionately preponderant control of economic policy of Government' and even 'endangering the security of those capital interests' on which the general prosperity of the country depends.[13]

The Commission observed that the Tamil submission regarding the maintenance of their present state of over-representation, was more than a mere plea but in the nature of a demand as of right. It was, the Tamils argued, not just a question of preserving the present number of seats for the Tamils but the preservation of the proportion of one to two with respect to the Sinhalese, which had been granted to them considering their importance as a community; in the event of an enlargement of the Council, it was argued, the Tamils would tolerate only a 'proportionate increase of seats' to other communities 'taken as a whole' and not individually; it was said to be imperative that the proportion should be maintained, that is, Sinhalese 2: Tamil 1: other communities 1.[14] And it was postulated, too, that such a proportion had to be maintained until the Tamils 'of their own accord'decide not to insist upon its maintenance and further, that it was not for the 'other community' (Sinhalese) to deny it to the Tamils.

There was, however, some disagreement within the Tamil leadership on the exact proportion. A splinter group of the All Ceylon Tamil Conference, led by Hon. A. Canagaratnam, demanded that the ratio of representation between the Sinhalese and the Tamils should be increased from 2:1 to 3:2. The Commissioners seemed scandalized

> 'Dr. Shiels Do you visualize a time when you might go on to 3:3 and ultimately perhaps 4:3 proceeding on that arbitrary sort of basis ... I understand there are 3,000,000 Sinhalese; 600,000 people compared to 3,000,000 asking for a 2:3 proportion; you cannot neglect the population. Do you think it fair...?
>
> A. Canagaratnam If we go on population basis alone... we as a community will go to the wall and be nowhere.'[15]

Indeed, some Tamil leaders thought that comparison of population was an irrelevant as well as an unfair exercise and worse, it would be like 'counting human beings as so many heads of cattle'.[16] Perhaps the Tamils pressed their case too far. It must have been with a touch of impatience that a Commissioner asked a leading Tamil spokesman:

> 'have you no fear of oppression of other smaller minorities? You are pretty well parcelling out the Island and not paying much attention to the other people'.[17]

The Commissioners also observed that the Tamil line of argument must lead 'logically' to all other minorities demanding over-representation too and with it a chaotic situation in the Constitution. To a question from Lord Donoughmore 'why should the Tamils have it only?' a Tamil spokesman's reply was only to be expected: that the Tamils 'were not asking for anything which they have not had'. The whole argument around proportions and ratios thus demonstrated beyond doubt that the results of the Colonial Office-Manning experiment at racial arithmetic was still the best hope and support of the Tamils; and perhaps more, that it seemed the root cause of the whole argument.

The Sinhalese did protest; indeed, protested too much considering their past ambivalence with regard to the ratio. Even in 1918, before the inauguration of the Congress,[18] and after the elections in 1921 at the Sravasti Conference,[19] perhaps in order to forge a Sinhalese-Tamil Union for purposes of constitutional reform, the Sinhalese elite had agreed to the ratio 2:1 between the two communi-

ties. Then again in 1925, long after the Tamil withdrawal from Congress, the Congress elite, in an attempt at rapproachment, had agreed on the 2:1 ratio with the Tamil Mahajana Sabha;[20] this last agreement, however, was to be vetoed by the Executive of Congress. Although the Congress elite attempted to play down these manoeuvres[21] and were undoubtedly embarrassed by them before Sinhalese audiences, there is not the least doubt that they had agreed in principle to the present equation. The Tamils, of course, reasonably could and did unearth these skeletons of the past for their own purposes even if the whole affair was to be wittily described by Lord Donoughmore as a 'very' successful bargain' from the Tamil's point of view.[22]

At the centre of the debate was also the thorny question of the Western Province communal seat - the Colombo seat - of the Tamils. Since a misunderstanding regarding this question had been greatly responsible for the disruption of good relations of the Sinhalese and Tamil elite in the Congress it is necessary to understand its background. In 1923, in spite of Sinhalese opposition, the Manning Reforms gave a communal seat to some 24,600 Tamils living in the Western Province, a predominantly Sinhalese area. The ensuing argument around this issue was to widen the gulf between the two groups.

To the Low-country Sinhalese the seat had become a deeply emotional issue; to these elite who were bitterly opposed to communal representation, the introduction of this seat in their midst - this piece of localized communalism, as they called it - would have been seen as an affront to their sensibilities; or that they were plainly incensed at the intrusion of a Tamil element into their home-ground. Whatever the reason, the fact that they were prepared to risk good relations on this issue, demonstrated the extent of their bitterness. On the other hand, the few influential Tamil elite settled in Colombo, - who, in fact, had lost a great deal of their Jaffna moorings - were determined to have a foothold in the metropolis.

The Sinhalese elite found in the granting of the seat another instance of what they called the Government's meanness, ulterior motive and racial favouritism.[23] There were, indeed, a number of allegations that the Administration

did not or could not explain; there was, for instance, the 'unexplained - reason' why 24,600 Tamils had been treated differently from 51,900 Moors, 108,000 Indians and 18,000 Burghers living in the Western Province and 27,000 Sinhalese living in the Eastern Province which is admittedly a Tamil Province.[24] Censure of the action came from the most unexpected quarters: some Tamils were bitter that their community had been 'used' by the Administration for its own purposes; 'what had been done', declared a leading Tamil in the Leglisative Council, was 'either done in ignorance or device' being a 'feature absolutely unnecessary in the present stage of the development of the Tamils'.[25]

The Administration was definitely embarrassed; it, perhaps, never bargained for the furious resentment and the interpretation given to the action. In the face of a bitter attack, the Attorney General was compelled to concede that the seat was an 'exception', while the Governor's admission was pathetic:

> 'had I been aware that it was possible that some of the Members who so strongly recommended the seat... would later break away I might have had some misgivings at the time I wrote my despatch. However, I could not possibly anticipate such an unexpected breakaway'.[26]

The Colonial Office's way out of the tangle was not to abolish the seat but to postpone trouble when it assured its willingness to review the whole question at the next instalment of reforms.[27]

With the announcement of the Commission, the agitation regarding the seat was renewed and intensified. The seat was argued to be a serious 'blot' and and 'anachronism' in the Constitution. It was said to be a piece of legislation that was 'unreasonable and unjustified' in that it was treating a minority 'in detail': whereas minority representation on a whole Island basis was reasonable, here, they argued, was the creation of a dangerous precedent of a communal seat 'sandwiched' within a territorial electorate and thus dividing each electorate into compartments.[28] It was also said to be 'manifestly one-sided' in that the Tamil community which had already been treated with 'extraordinary generosity' had been singled out for the further favour of a separate seat.[29] The only reason for its existence, it was averred, was that a Governor thought that 'one more Tamil would do well' for his own purposes.[30] But the

most unfortunate aspect of this piece of legislation was, and this was stressed before the Commissioners, that it had become the 'bedrock' of misunderstanding and the 'apple of discord' between the two communities in that it had created racial jealousies and communal antipathies in an area (Colombo) where such feelings had never been known.[31]

The Tamil elite, however, were not prepared to let it go. Led by Ramanathan, they demanded its retention, in the strongest terms. The seat, they argued, was theirs by 'prescription': it had been given and now it should not be taken away. Tamil attachment to the seat was unmistakable: it was described as the 'very essence' of the political life of the Tamils. The All Ceylon Tamil Conference told the Commission why it was so:

> 'it is a matter of sentiment; we think our national prestige is entwined with the retention of this seat.... Abolition would be considered by the Tamils of the Western Province as an unfriendly act on the part of the British Government'.[32]

The Tamil agitation over the ratio of representation and their anxiety over the Colombo Seat would naturally raise the question of underlying reasons. Several explanations are possible: the influence of cultural theories about Dravidian antiquity and self-sufficiency, emanating from South India, could be one;[33] British attitudes to the Tamil community in Ceylon could be another; but the Tamil attitudes could also be understood as a reaction to the trends in Sinhalese thinking of this period.

It is significant that the Tamil ferment in Ceylon during this period coincided with the period of the non-Brahman movement and Tamil separatism in South India. In fact, there are several features that are common to the two movements in India and Ceylon. For instance, the struggle in South India as well as in Ceylon seemed to be between the Aryans (Brahmans in India and the Sinhalese in Ceylon) and the Dravidians (Tamils); again, in both situations the Vellalas were the chief instigators.[34] Several other factors too indicate the influence of these cultural ideas on Tamil thinking in Ceylon: although, for instance, there is no doubt that Tamils had always been conscious of their identity as different from that of the Sinhalese, there was now a definite

tendency to view their culture as opposed to that of the Sinhalese. Indeed, in the arguments in favour of communal representation and in the agitation for the Colombo Seat the cultural argument became the most prominent.

The argument revealed the new Dravidian-Tamil awareness. It began with the Tamil claim to a certain cultural 'importance' vis-a-vis the Sinhalese. The more moderate, and certainly the more representative Tamil spokesmen, spoke of the 'high culture' of the Tamils, and the 'equal position' that the Tamil community has held in the Island;[35] or the 'very high level' of the culture of the Tamils which was in 'no way inferior to that of the Sinhalese'.[36] But the more extreme Tamil opinion, mainly represented by The Hindu Organ in Jaffna, spoke of the Dravidian as the 'more important race' than the Aryan, and the Tamil language as the 'richer' language than the Sinhalese. This cultural talk was, of course, bound to drag in ancient history and historical antagonisms in its wake: a small minority of Tamils were even heard to say that except, perhaps, the aboriginal Veddahs, every race in Ceylon, including the Sinhalese, were invaders of Ceylon, and even then, they argued, there was reason to believe that before the arrival of the Aryans, the Island

> 'must have been a Dravidian country and so the Tamils being Dravidians might claim greater right to Ceylon than any other community.'[37]

One Tamil spokesman even expressed the view that the Sinhalese were 'interlopers here'.[38]

The struggle for Colombo could also be better understood when viewed in the context of this new thinking of the Tamils. The Western Province, and particularly Colombo, had, during the Colonial period, become the intellectual, cultural, social and economic hub of the country; Colombo, moreover, had become the political nerve-centre of the country mainly because of the Legislative Council there. Official presence in Colombo, through a representative, would have been of deep symbolic significance to Tamil thinking. The demand, therefore, was inevitable.

British attitudes too, no doubt indirectly, played a part in the Tamil claim. British writers and Administrators alike often had a habit of compar-

ing and contrasting Tamil 'diligence' with Sinhalese 'laziness'.[39] Even if it was almost axiomatic for most Colonial observers to admire 'weak' minorities and belittle 'strong'majorities, often for the most admirable reasons, it is difficult to say that in Ceylon a claim of this nature by the Tamils was not influenced by such European sentiments. We have already noted Governor Manning's admiration of the Tamils. But Clifford was not only an admirer of the Tamils: he was barely able to speak of the Tamils without comparing them with the Sinhalese; he thought that the Tamils were

> 'among the most thrifty, diligent, enterprising and intelligent of Oriental peoples. In their own country (Jaffna) they devote unremitting labour to the intensive cultivation of land that is none too fertile and of which Sinhalese peasants would be able to make very little'.[40]

There is no need to question the accuracy of those observations, and there is no need to probe the motives behind those comparisons, but, on the other hand, there is no denying their impact on communal relations in Ceylon in general and Tamil thinking in particular.

Then again, the Tamil claim could have been as a reaction against an arrogant and often deeply insensitive attitude of some sections of the Sinhalese camp. Though the Sinhalese political leaders - especially those on the Congress platform - were generally correct in their statements about the Tamils, some sections of an emerging group of sub-elite, mainly Sinhalese teachers, journalists in vernacular journals and ayurvedic physicians, were openly antagonistic to the Tamils and Tamil claims and less cautious in their expressions of opinion. Some sections of the Sinhalese Press too, especially the extreme Sinhalese-nationalist variety like the Sinhala Jatiya (Sinhalese Race) and some Sinhalese novels of the period were among the worst offenders.[41] On the other hand, the revivalist talk of the period, often expressing a desire to make the country a Sinhalese-Buddhist state, could have instilled a sense of fear in the minds of the Tamil minority. The Tamil claims could thus be understood as a reaction or an armour against a deep-seated fear of majority intentions.

In any case, the insistence on their 'importance' as an argument before the Commission - even if it was by a minority of Tamils - seemed to be counter-productive. There were the few Sinhalese who were prepared to generalise and interpret this attitude in the context of the whole Tamil demand. One such opinion was that the Tamils who were not willing to accept their 'true position' were attempting to bolster their 'extravagant demands' by an 'exaggerated idea of their own importance';[42] there were others who believed that the Tamils by their claims to importance were betraying a sense of intolerance and arrogance and had thus become a 'race of whole-hoggers' in favour of their own rights to the detriment of those of others.[43] The Commissioners' impatience with this line of argument has already been noted.

But the real stumbling-block in the way of the Tamil elite and their demands was a problem within the Tamil community itself. It was the caste and religious minority problem in the very enclave of Jaffna. A large number of Tamil minority groups (religious and caste) described for the Commission harrowing details of Hindu upper caste intolerance in Jaffna. In fact, the very political elite who were demanding rights for the Tamils were said to be the perpetrators of this 'persecution' of the minorities in their midst.[44] In Jaffna, where all the severity of the caste system prevailed, the leadership (social and political) which was mainly Vellala was said to be so oppressive that a number of low caste - the so-called 'depressed class' - deputations begged the Commission for special representation as a protection against their present leaders.[45] At least two leading Tamil deputations to the Donoughmore Commission were acutely embarrassed when closely questioned about their relations with the low castes.[46] One newspaper editorialized that if any area in Ceylon justified a wider franchise for the masses it is 'in this land of caste maniacs' (Jaffna) so that the 'powerful oligarchs with reactionary ideas might be driven out from the positions of vantage they now occupy.'[47] The Commissioners themselves were so concerned that on many occasions during the sessions they drew the attention of Tamil leaders to their obligations to

the depressed classes,[48] and later, in the Report itself, they were to adduce the problem in Jaffna as a reason for introducing universal franchise: the Commissioners wrote,

> 'we have already referred to the condition of the 70,000 or 80,000 persons of low caste or depressed classes among the Tamil community. One of our wishes is that many of them by receiving the vote will not only be placed in a better position to obtain redress for their grievances but will gain a new status and self-respect as possessing one of the highest privileges of citizenship'.[49]

Even the Christian minority in Jaffna was said to be openly 'ill-treated' by the Hindu majority there.[50] Some Christian leaders, however, went one step further and played the same card, which the Tamil Hindu leaders played, before the Commission. And their demand seemed curiously logical too: as the Tamils, who were only about eleven per cent of the total population of Ceylon were demanding a 2:3 ratio of representation vis-a-vis the Sinhalese, they argued, the Christians in Jaffna who were about eleven per cent of the Tamil population should be given 2:3 ratio of representation from the number of seats that might be allocated to the Tamils as a whole.[51] Even if this argument seemed to verge on the ridiculous, this and the whole Jaffna minority case demonstrated the extent of minority alienation from the upper caste Hindu majority. There was not the least doubt that, at the end of the public sessions of the Commission, the Tamil Hindu leaders had emerged deeply mortified if not seriously discredited in the eyes of the Commissioners as well as of the country.

But now there were signs of a gathering impatience in the North and the East. These areas, at this period, witnessed the emergence of a young generation of Tamil intellectuals, who were disenchanted with the 'old men' who spoke for the Tamils. Composed of Hindus and Christians, the group is noteworthy for its non-sectarianism and its ideals of Ceylonese nationalism. Their very organisation, the Students' Congress, indicated their desire to involve young Tamils in a radical transformation of thinking and attitude with regard to the problems facing the Tamils and the country.

They began with an analysis of their leaders' record; it was comprehensive as well as trenchant. They found their leaders engaged in a series of 'petty

and vulgar squabbles and agitations' and thus demonstrating a terrible 'bankruptcy of vision'. There was the tragedy of their attitudes: they were living in the past with their eyes fixed on an 'ugly history' based on the 'pernicious' tenets of caste, whose 'ruinous doctrines' had kept 'class from class and race from race and prevented their working together'. There were the great blunders: the 'varnished phrases' of the leaders, it was alleged, had shrouded the 'ghastliness of great national tragedies' the greatest of which was that of keeping

> 'Tamil interests absolutely divorced from those of the Sinhalese, of regarding them always and everywhere as rivals, whose interests are necessarily inimical to those of the Tamils';[52]

and they were said to have blundered further in dividing the Tamil ranks by 'raising the banner of religious prejudice'. There were, moreover, the myths of the leaders: for instance, the talk of the 'oppressive majority', was said to be maintained to shut the eyes of the ordinary Tamil to the fact that the squabbling was between the leaders of the two communities; the ordinary Sinhalese, it was argued, had at all times extended 'their right hand of friendship' to the Tamils: Tamil lawyers and doctors who practised in Sinhalese areas were able to prosper; Tamils had no difficulty in acquiring land in Sinhalese areas - indeed, some Tamils were the leading landlords in Sinhalese areas;[53] it was also pointed out that the myth had been so well spread that only those who lived among the Sinhalese knew that they 'were no tyrants.[54] Even the most eminent among the leaders did not escape criticism: Arunachalam, for instance, was the 'she-wolf' which 'ate up her first-born' and 'threw a bomb at the two communities' - a reference, no doubt, to Arunachalam's founding and later withdrawal from the Ceylon National Congress.[55]

The cricitism was not only an indictment of the Tamil leadership but also a scrutiny of the part of the Government in the Tamil predicament. Indeed, they found their leaders' guilt the less and the Government's guilt the more in that their leaders had merely been gullible in accepting a 'disgusting bargain' against the Sinhalese . Their contention was that in accepting

communal representation the leaders had only fallen into a snare laid for them by a designing Administration, which had its own interests in seeing

> 'the tension between the two communities maintained. While the Tamils were standing aloof from the Sinhalese, the third party was exploiting the situation.'[56]

Indeed, so the argument ran, the Government had achieved what it had set out to achieve in the first place: the Ceylon National Congress which should have been the platform of 'unity of sorrow and action' between the two communities had been successfully 'emasculated'.[57]

What then was their solution to the Tamil predicament? Actually, in their view, it was not to a Tamil predicament but to a Ceylonese one that they had to seek a solution. The first step was to be the realization by both communities of the terrible hopelessness of their dependence on a third party to solve their mutual problems. Experience had proved this: the leaders of the two communities, like the proverbial 'two cats' which had taken their cheese to the 'monkey', had always been outwitted.[58] They have also to be aware of the danger of the 'stranger' in their midst; the misunderstandings of the two communities - really 'family' misunderstandings - have often been amplified out of proportion: the 'stranger' 'seeing through the window' the 'brother and sister fighting with pillows' had spread abroad the notion that there was a 'revolution' on;[59] too long, they complained, had they been told 'how much the two communities differed and not how much they were similar' and they queried,

> 'if some white races could for political purposes say that they were ethnologically one, culturally one, why should not the Tamils turn to the Sinhalese and say that Vijaya married a Madura princess and the last king of Kandy was a Tamilian,'[60]

But part of the solution was in the hands of the Tamils themselves. They had to work hand in hand with the Sinhalese for a 'national rejuvenation'; and the Tamil people had to be educated to the 'common destiny and soul of the nation' and of the great ideals of 'equality and sacrifice'. Such a plan alone, they argued, would lead to a common 'salvation' which is the 'consummation of a united Ceylonese nation'.[61]

It is difficult to assess the impact of this criticism on the Tamil leaders themselves, but it seems reasonable to surmise that it was the more painful as it came from within the Tamil camp itself.

Criticism of the Tamil leadership, indirectly no doubt, was to come from other unexpected quarters too. Mahatma Gandhi on a visit to the Island, during this period, on the invitation of the Tamil leadership, was not to be their expected consolation; Gandhi commented that he was unable to understand,

> 'why a numerical minority should ever consider that it would not have its place properly examined if it were not separately represented... an attitude of that character betrayed a want of national consciousness'.[62]

The Tamil political leadership already shaken by serious criticism was revealing some internal idealogical differences too. One area of disagreement was the issue of responsible government for the Island. While the Sinhalese political elite, at least those on the Congress platform, were, not unpredictably, demanding responsible government for the Ceylonese, the Tamil leaders were heatedly debating the point. The more conservative Tamil League and the Jaffna Mahajana Sabha, were firmly opposed to responsible government as they thought this would mean 'Sinhalese rule';[63] the All Ceylon Tamil Conference, however, more alive to possible Sinhalese 'bitterness' in the event of Tamil opposition to 'Ceylonese aspirations', and because of a 'love of the Motherland' and a 'need to present a united front to the outsider', was in favour of responsible government.[64] However, with the gathering cry for responsible government around the period of the Special Commission, even the diehard Tamil opinion was moving in the direction of a much more moderate 'go slow' position: not a 'gallop' towards responsible government but a 'trot', a gradual transference of power, with 'minimum powers in early stages' till members of each and every community in Ceylon can say 'I am a son of Ceylon' instead of 'I am from such and such a community'.[65]

The real extent of the division of the Jaffna camp became only too clear when the various Tamil deputations made their appearance before the Commission; there was such a variety of spokesmen, and indeed, such an embarrassing

variety of opinions that one of the Commissioners commented on their lack of a 'common policy' and their misfortune at having to 'speak with two voices'.[66]

When the Report of the Commission was published, in July 1928, the Tamil political elite were to be among the unhappiest in the land; they had reason to be. The Report's outright condemnation of communal representation - a principle to which the Tamil elites were deeply attached - the rejection of their special communal seat in the Western Province and even the extension of the franchise had been against all that they hoped for.

The Report observed that the Tamils had, in the past, for various reasons, 'many of them wholly admirable' obtained 'political influence somewhat disproportionate to their numerical strength' - a condition which was not seen to be conducive to the constitutional development and the communal relations of the Island as a whole. As for the question of the special seat for the Tamils in the Western Province and their claim to its retention, 'after careful attention' the Commissioners had found themselves 'unable to see any good reason for its continuance'; and even regarding the total electoral fabric of the Island, the Commissioners did not see the necessity 'for any arbitrary settlement of the relative proportions of the Sinhalese and Tamil seats'; while this could be interpreted as a barbed reference to Tamil leaders' obsession with bargains and ratios, it was certainly evidence of the Commissioners' determination to reject whatever vestiges of communal representation for, it was in effect, a foreclosure of a possible indirect revival of communal representation by reservation of seats and other such devices; their desire was for the democratic process to take its course unhampered by any communal manipulation. The Tamils, however, the Commissioners declared, had not much reason to be apprehensive as, in view of the fact of the concentration of the Tamil population in various areas, they were 'certain' to receive a 'substantial number of territorial seats'.[67]

Tamil elite anger at the abolition of communal representation and the removal of the Western Province Seat was to be expected. What was significant however, in the anti-Donoughmore Reform agitation of the Tamil leaders, was

that their wrath was directed more against the extension of the franchise than the other issues. Although they wanted the whole scheme rejected they seemed to reserve their venom for the grant of adult franchise. The ostensible reason for this opposition - as expressed by Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, the Tamil leader - was that the move was a 'leap in the dark' and that such 'socialistic' legislation would overstrain the financial resources of the country. The Soulbury Commission Report,[68] which later analysed this Tamil elite attitude did not seem to be convinced that this was the real reason; commenting on Ramanathan's views, the Report declared:

> 'no doubt he did so in all sincerity; but unfortunately it could be insinuated that he was biased because his community - the Ceylon Tamils - could enjoy a distinct advantage in a literacy test, particularly over the more backward Kandyans.' (p.13).

Ramanathan revealed another aspect of Tamil elite - who were predominantly Vellala - thinking when he spoke in anger regarding the handing over of power to the 'profane crowd' of 'undisciplined, uneducated and reckless voters, ignorant persons who cannot think, speak or act rightly'.[69]

On closer examination it seems certain that the principle of universal suffrage, or the rejection of it, seemed much less important to them or even worrying to them as some of its implications; indeed, the real cause of their apprehension seemed to be - even the Governor observed this[70] - the enfranchisement of the depressed classes.

The 'profane crowd' was really upper caste rhetoric for the scum of their earth - the low castes, whose right to vote, naturally, made them nervous. Indeed, the predominantly Velalla, Hindu leaders were doubly nervous: the fear of the low caste vote not going to be theirs was painful enough but the strong possibility that their vote could go en bloc to the Christian elite, who espoused their cause, would have been an unbearable and an agonising thought.

But there was still the hope of the scheme being rejected in the Legislative Council. Sinhalese displeasure at the scheme's proposal to enfranchise the million or so Indian immigrant plantation labourers, was the Tamils' last hope of repudiating the Report. Although the enfrancisement of the Indian

labour population appealed to Tamil sentiment - connected as they were by ties of race, religion and language - the urgency of their own immediate problems and the desire to defeat the Donoughmore scheme prompted a policy of tacit approval for the Sinhalese line on the issue of Indian immigrant franchise. Thus this period turned out to be one of Tamil elite friendliness towards the Sinhalese elite.

The actual debate and voting on the scheme, in December 1929, contained moments of high drama. But while the outcome itself - a close vote in favour of acceptability of the scheme, 19 for and 17 against - was dramatic enough, the real drama was in the voting behaviour and attitude of the Tamil Councillors. Here too were seen the divisions that had plagued the Tamil political leadership in the past. Although the voting itself, or a superficial view of Tamil voting figures, did not lay bare the cleavage - only the Tamil Member from the East, a Christian, and said to be a 'close friend of the Sinhalese' voted for the scheme - the behind-the-scene manoevures of some of the Members were revealing. A. Mahadeva, for instance, who favoured the Reforms, decided at the last moment to vote against them.[71] H.A.p. Sandrasagara, who, like Mahadeva, favoured the Reforms, but decided to vote against them, perhaps in order to satisfy his 'rejectionist' Tamil colleagues, seemed to hope secretly that the 'acceptionists' would win the day, in spite of Tamil opposition; indeed his attitude was strange; the Colonial Secretary observed this ambivalence of Sandrasagara: he asked for permission to speak at a moment when a snap decision was near and when oral voting had taken place; three pro-Reform Members were absent and everyone in the House realised that the snap decision, if allowed to take place, would result in the rejection of the Scheme; and yet, concluded the Colonial Secretary, 'it was an (apparently) ardent 'rejectionist' who asked permission to prolong the debate and provide a chance to save the scheme. Most observers, however, held - the Administration was in this category too - perhaps unfairly, that the real reason for the Tamils to be 'rejectionists' as a body was because the Sinhalese were 'acceptionists';

whatever the reason, the outcome of the voting was indicative enough of the polarization of Sinhalese-Tamil elite feelings and opinions.

The Tamil politicians, however, would not give up. The Tamils, declared their leader Ramanathan, would never give in to the 'political slavery' ushered in by 'four men who know no more about Ceylon than the man in the moon'.[72] Ramanathan then went to England with a promise that 'all is not yet over' even if, for the moment, 'Donoughmore had won the day'.[73]

Ramanathan, perhaps, miscalculated his own influence with the Colonial Office. As far as the Colonial Office was concerned, Manning's old confidant and its own quondam friend did not seem to have further uses. In fact, there was even a prolonged discussion whether he should be granted an interview with the Secretary of State at all, and finally was granted oneonly in recognition of his 'bygone importance';[74] even then the comments of some senior Colonial Office officials were certainly not very complimentary nor, for that matter, very charitable to the Tamil leader.[75] Ramanathan harked back to the old days of the Manning System and communal representation only to be told that times had changed and that there was no going back on the Donoughmore recommendations. It was perhaps, with a rude shock, that he realised that communal representations and Manning Systems had only been Colonial Office experiments that had failed and that there was now a new experiment on: the Donoughmore Experiment.

The Tamils had other worries too; there were growing signs that language was becoming a further area of friction between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. In the early twenties, if there was any talk of language it was a question of the 'vernacular' gradually replacing English as the 'medium of culture and communication'; but already during the sessions of the Donoughmore Commission there were signs of a change: some Sinhalese groups were quietly speaking of the need for the Sinhalese language to be given its 'due place'.[76] On the platform and in the Sinhalese Press there was open talk of the Sinhalese language being the 'vernacular proper' of Ceylon, being the language of the

'vast majority' of the people, whereas the Tamil language was said to have its'real home in South India' where its literature received ample 'stimulation' and had the 'fullest scope for development'. Some even asked: 'is there any difficulty to raise Sinhalese to be the medium of higher education as well?'[77] In such a climate the Tamils could and did say that their warning of Sinhalese domination had already come true; and in truth, the utterances of some Sinhalese extremists were not exactly calculated to allay the fears of the Tamils, either. In any case, the post-Donoughmore Commission period witnessed the sowing of the first seeds of a Sinhalese linguistic nationalism that was to engender so much unpleasantness between the two communities in the years to come, especially in the first decade after Independence. The signs were also clear that the gulf that was created, during the Manning period, between the elites of the two communities was now widening to include the sub-elite of the two communities and it seemed a matter of time before the division extended to the very heart of both communities.

The political observers of the period discovered, in the immediate post-Donoughmore Commission era, three streams of political opinion in Jaffna: the 'conservatives', who were totally opposed to the Donoughmore Scheme - adult suffrage, the committee system of government, and the abolition of communal representation; the 'moderates', who were said to oppose the committee system and immediate adult suffrage; and the 'radicals', who welcomed adult suffrage and abolition of communal representation and were said to be the 'followers of Gandhi' demanding immediate self government for the Ceylonese. The events of this period were to demonstrate that in the traditionally conservative Jaffna the 'conservatives' were still the masters. The famous 'boycott issue', the Tamil boycott of the 1931 elections based on the Donoughmore Scheme - was of their making.

Their failure in the Legislative Council and then the abortive Ramanathan mission to the Colonial Office had made the Tamil elite deeply bitter. But in the absence of any other alternative they acquiesced in the decision to try

the new Constitution. There was no talk of non-cooperation. In fact, long before the announcement of the Nomination Day-4 April 1931 - 'numerous candidates had begun to nurse their constituencies and keen contests were anticpiated in every divison in Jaffna'.[78]

The idea of a boycott seems to have emerged from a meeting, in April, of the Jaffna Youth League - an arm of the more conservative group of politicians - presided over by a visiting Indian woman politician, Mrs. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya. By Nomination Day all but two of the candidates had agreed not to hand in their nominations. But all those who had intended to stand for election came to the kachcheri at the time for nominations and several were prepared to be nominated in opposition should any anti-boycotter seek nomination; only two minutes before closing time did the one anti-boycott candidate (Saravanamutthu) decide not to stand. Thus, in the Jaffna peninsula, the boycott movement was a total success.[79]

The Administration's view of the events was that Jaffna, 'intimidated' by some extremist Youth Leaguers, had been 'stampeded' into non-cooperation only to realise too late the 'folly' of their action.[80] In the light of the events of the day and later developments, this view, indeed, seems reasonable.

The real, but unexpressed reason for the action seemed to be the Youth Leaguers' need to find a 'cheap' but 'sensational' protest against a scheme they deeply resented and one which they thought would open the doors to Sinhalese majority rule. An ostensible reason provided later, however, was that the new Constitution was no advance towards self-government.[81]

But somehow, the Youth Leaguers' motives for the boycott does not seem to provide a satisfactory explanation for the Jaffna political elite leadership's acquiesence in such a policy. It is, moreover, difficult to believe that the Youth Leaguers could so completely 'intimidate' the mature politicians into a state of subservience. On the other hand, a willingness to be 'intimidated' calls for explanation. The observant E.T. Dyson, did discover such an explanation: he reported that he was told by a leading

supporter of one of the boycott candidates that

> 'some of the Members of the old Legislative Council fearing that they would not be elected by a new electorate welcomed the idea of a boycott...It would have been a graceful means of withdrawal without loss of prestige'.[82]

Considering the undoubted disenchantment of many Jaffnese - mainly the low castes - with a leadership that stood solidly against universal suffrage and the vote for the 'profane crowd', the above explanation seems reasonable.

An analysis of the numerous appeals, memoranda and petitions addressed to the Governor and the Colonial Office to appoint a fresh nomination day revealed the extent of scape-goat hunting, post-mortems and soul-searching that followed the event. The scape-goat generally turned out to be 'the seditious Indian lady' who had 'inspired pliant politicians' to act so foolishly. The post-mortems revealed a 'precipitate and unwise action of the candidates most of whom timidly shrank from a doubtful contest'. In the painful soul-searching they discovered that the tragedy was of their own making, that 'men of moderate views were not prepared to stand up against the demands of extremists'. And as this'childish exhibition of temper' which turned out to be a 'strategic mistake' was the 'folly and weakness of the few' they appealed that the 'large majority should not be penalized on that account'.[83]

The real enormity of the situation dawned on the Tamil leaders when they realised their absence from the new State Council scene where an exciting new constitutional experiment was being tried; and their agony must have been the more excruciating when they realised that two of the seven Ceylonese in the Board of Ministers were from two minority communities much smaller than their own - an Indian and a Muslim.

The Administration's and the Colonial Office's attitude to the Tamil boycott is very interesting. At the ceremonial opening of the State Council the Governor promised that as soon as he was fully convinced of a 'genuine desire of the majority' of the Tamils for fresh elections, he would be 'only too glad to fix a nomination day'. At the same time, however, he ad-

vised the Colonial Office that 'it would be a great mistake to make overtures to them'.[84] In the Colonial Office itself the issue was seriously debated. But the debate itself was significant in that it revealed the Colonial Office's changed attitude to the Tamils. The new coolness was demonstrated in its almost calculated cruelty in making excuses on the grounds of minor constitutional issues - like the difficulties of tinkering with the Order in Council to give power to the Governor to fix a fresh nomination day and the danger of creating a precedent - to postpone a decision for almost three years after the event; indeed, in a cold, unhurried way, the discussion was not so much about the Jaffnese as such nor even about their non-representation in Council but how tactically relevant was the issue to the new constitutional experiment that was being tried.

There were two schools of thought in the Colonial Office regarding the boycott issue; one against and the other in favour of a policy of conciliation of the Tamils. The anti-conciliation group was headed by R.E. Costar of the Ceylon Department. This groups' arguments are revealing: giving in would appear an encouragement to a repetition of such an action in the future; the Tamils were only 'paying for their lack of courage' in not standing up to extremists and hence a term of suffering was good for them; and the pro-boycotters might secure election and either refuse to sit or obstruct business in Council and try to destroy the scheme.

The pro-conciliation group was led by the influential H.R.Cowell, the Head of the Ceylon Department. This group seemed to provide the stronger set of arguments: the pain of mind caused by their exclusion was punishment enough; continued refusal may well be construed as a victory for the boycotting element over the more responsible section of the Jaffnese; the defence of a continued refusal to grant a new election would be difficult in view of the promise of the Governor; the boycott was, after all, the childish whim of a few, it would be well advised to meet their wishes and 'so involve them in a tacit acceptance of the Constitution (Donoughmore)'; and most important, the addition of four Tamils to the State Council would

'be a valuable counterpoise to the existing Sinhalese majority'.[85]

The boycott and the consequent Tamil isolation in their Jaffna enclave was to have far reaching effects on their status as a minority in the Island and in their relations with the majority Sinhalese. The terrible isolation provided the ideal soil for seeds of separatism that were to germinate and thrive with such dire results, at a later period, for peace and communal harmony in the Island. At first, it was a sense of bitterness at what they called the 'Sinhalese indifference'; they spoke of the silence of the Sinhalese politicians,

> 'allowing Jaffna which gave to Ceylon some of the best statesmen and politicians to vegetate in a condition of political apathy'.[86]

If a failure by default seemed culpable enough, here indeed seemed to be one; hardly a Sinhalese voice was heard in the State Council or elsewhere regarding the crucial issue of Jaffna's absence in the State Council. Sinhalese aloofness would have been the more poignant when the Tamils could and did remember the generosity of Tamil leadership in moments of Sinhalese agony.[87]

Left to itself, the Tamil mind was exhibiting two different separatist tendencies: a tendency to seek for political unity with the Subcontinent and a desire for separate status in a federated Island.

Jaffna's geographical and cultural closeness to India was a fact; and there was always the possibility of Jaffna's reference to this closeness in moments of crisis. There was also the possibility that this closeness could influence or transform Tamil bitterness into defiance. In fact, seeds of defiance were already in evidence during the sessions of the Donoughmore Commission: a few Tamil voices were heard to say that

> 'in view of the Sinhalese menace the only thing the Tamils had for their protection were the forty million Tamils in South India'.[88]

Actually, this closeness and its implications had begun to interest a number of politicians on the 'other side' (in South India) too; a number of such politicians had even begun to believe firmly that making Ceylon part of India would be a solution to the Tamils' as well as to Ceylon's problems. They were so serious about it that they even asked Gandhi for his opinion; Gandhi

was, of course, careful; he observed that

> 'Although we have common culture with Ceylon and although it is predominantly inhabited by Indians from the South, it is a separate entity and as I have no imperial aspirations for India in my imagination, I should be content to regard Ceylon as an absolutely independent State; but I should not hesitate to accept Ceylon as part of free India if the Islanders express their wish to be so in unmistakable language'.[89]

During the period of the sessions of the Commission, however, whatever Tamil references to Indian affinity would have sounded mere Tamil elite rhetoric to impress the Commissioners; but now they did turn their eyes - and this seemed only natural and reasonable in the circumstances - to an area to which they could refer as their original ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural home. Some enterprising Tamil intellectuals were actually making a very good case too, not only for themselves but also for the whole Island, to be federated with India - as a separate province. Their reasoning was revealing: after all, they argued, Ceylon is an island 'pushed into the Indian Ocean from the mainland of India'; it is also better to be united with India because 'as an enemy India will be terrible' but as a friend India has so much to offer; India, again could 'protect' Ceylon from 'foreign aggression' if and when the British withdraw; and at least once in recent history Ceylon had been ruled from India (this was perhaps a reference to the first years of British rule).

It was argued that such a federation with India would be very convenient for all parties concerned: for, the British Government 'could conveniently group her possessions' so as to 'effectively and economically' rule them; the European community could 'actively cooperate with their kins in India'; the Burghers instead of 'disappearing as a community (as they are doing now)' will have the 'natural cooperation of the Anglo-Indian community in India'; the Mohammedans will be 'relieved of their anxiety about being exposed to the danger of the major community.' Indeed, the 'events of 1915 are never likely to be repeated' and the federation 'will gladden their hearts'; the Sinhalese have their 'origin from India' and 'hence cannot seriously make any objection to the federation'. As the major community in this State of

the federation the Sinhalese will have 'no reason for fear'; the Tamils, of course, are 'intimately connected' with the 'people of India' and hence 'would have no objection' to the idea of a federation. Indeed, federation with India, these Tamil thinkers concluded, is the 'only cure' for 'all our ills'.[90]

The Sinhalese, of course, would never think of such a federation. Although in the early days of the Reform Movement such a thought could have been respectable and, in fact, even some 'great Sinhalese Nationalists' thought out loud on such a possibility in order to make a case for hastening reforms,[91] now, in these post-Donoughmore Commission days such talk would be anathema to the Sinhalese. In these days of Sinhalese nationalist revival even a whispered suggestion that Ceylon was or should be an appendage of India would have caused a paroxysm of rage, especially among the Sinhalese elite.

Tamil thinking was moving in other separatist directions too. There was talk of separate status for the Tamils in a federated Ceylon. In their present mood such talk, too, was to be expected. What is surprising, however, was that such separatist talk had been virtually non-existent before this period. While the Kandyans were urging Donoughmore to consider them separately, the Tamils had hardly entertained such thoughts; now that Donoughmore had left and the Kandyans were beginning to acquiesce in the concept of a united Ceylon, the Tamils were resorting to a separatist logic. The Tamils were suggesting federation as the

> 'ideal government characteristic of the country and the genius of her people'.[92]

The Tamils even remembered that only a few years earlier even a reputable Sinhalese politician like S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, the young Secretary of the Ceylon National Congress, believed in a Ceylon 'like federal Switzerland where three races lived' and thought of federation as the way out for Ceylon's communal problems.[93] But of course these were changed times and such opinions were not fashionable any more among the Sinhalese leaders.

Even those who had held them would not have been anxious to remember that they had held them once. But what was perhaps, not sufficiently appreciated was the fact of Tamil courage to seek separation at all; the Kandyans, for instance, had a rich land with tremendous potentialities for economic development and expansion when they asked for separation; the Tamils did not have this advantage: it was an unproductive and arid land in which they toiled; it was in Colombo that a greater number of their elite found employment. Federation would have meant giving up so much. It was, however, this ideology that was to catch on and fire the Tamils in years to come; it was to be the motive force behind the largest single political party - The Federal Party - that dominated the political scene of the North and the East in an Independent Ceylon.

NOTES

1. Seven of these eight seats were said to be territorial although the Tamils themselves later agreed that they were 'camouflaged' communal seats, being the seats of the Northern and Eastern Provinces which were predominantly Tamil, the All-Ceylon Tamil Conference, evidence before the D.Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.II; the other seat was the special seat for the Tamils in the Western Province (the Colombo Seat).
2. Figures calculated up to 31 December 1924 based on the census figures of 1921, in Clifford to Secretary of State for Colonies, 20. November 1926, C.O. 537,692.
3. Clifford to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 20 November 1926, C.O. 537,692.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. The Jaffna Association based in Jaffna, though inaugurated in 1906, was revived in 1921 after years of inactivity. But even this was said to be 'virtually defunct, having an occasional general meeting' until the Commission was announced, C.I., 30 December 1927; Jaffna Mahajana Sabha inaugurated in 1921 and based also in Jaffna was described as 'never having held a general meeting since its inauguration in 1921' but 'had the original Committee speaking for the "people of Jaffna"' in 1927, ibid; The Tamil League founded by Arunachalam in Colombo in 1921 was an organisation of the Tamils in the Western Province. The All-Ceylon Tamil Conference was inaugurated in preparation for the Commission, for the purpose of coordinating Tamil opinion. The Low-Country-based and mainly Low-Country Sinhalese-oriented national Press seemed to have attempted to play down the strength and influence of the minority organisations by pointing to their recent origin or their sudden activism in preparation for the Commission. The fact, however, was that virtually all Sinhalese political associations were no different from the minority ones in this regard; for example, most mahajana sabhas in the Sinhalese areas, which mushroomed in the 1918-1921 period, remained largely inactive till they were revived in preparation for the Commission.
7. See end of present Chapter.
8. A. Canagaratnam (a Tamil Legislative Councillor) to D. Commission, D.C.W.S.

Vol. I; and his evidence before the D.Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.III,p.114.
9. The All-Ceylon Tamil Conference to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.I; and the report of the proceedings of general meeting of the above Conference held on 11 September 1927, in D.C.W.S., Vol.I.
10. H.A.P.Sandrasagara (the leading Tamil Roman Catholic politician) to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol. VII.
11. The Unionist Society (Memorandum 1) to D.Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VII; the Society was a mainly Low-Country Sinhalese-Christian-oriented political association of some of the country's richest men of the period: Sir Solomon Dias Bandaranaike (President), and Sir Marcus Fernando (Founder and Vice-President); see Chapter VII, note 64.
12. The Labour Union of Ceylon to D.Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.IV; the labour movement gained strength and influence during this period under the energetic leadership of A.E. Goonesinghe; Goonesinghe often accused the Sinhalese leadership in the Ceylon National Congress and elsewhere of 'selfish' obsession with their own 'capital interests' and not being sensitive to the 'plight of the ordinary man'.
13. The reasoning which was undoubtedly shared by most Sinhalese elite groups was openly voiced by the Unionist Party; for more details about this party, see Chapter VI, note 46 of this Study.
14. A. Canagaratnam to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.I.
15. A. Canagaratnam in evidence before the D. Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.III,p.114.
16. Christians of Jaffna to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol. IV.
17. See evidence of the Jaffna Association before D. Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.III
18. Two leading Sinhalese politicians - James Peiris and E.J.Samarawikrama - who had held discussions with the Tamil political leadership (including Ponnambalam Arunachalam) agreed in writing to the 2:1 ratio between the two communities.
19. The Conference held at "Sravasti" in Colombo on 16-17 November 1921: the Sinhalese delegates were - James Peiris, W.A.de Silva, D.B. Jayatilaka, F.R.Senanayake, A.St.Vincent Jayawardene, C.E.Corea, Victor Corea; the Tamil delegates - A.Sabhapathy, E.R.Tambimutthu, K.Balasingham, S.R. Rajaratnam, T.R.Nalliah, A.Canagaratnam, H.A.P.Sandrasagara, M.A.Arulanandan, W.S.Eliyathamby, W.G.Niles and MudaliyarKariyapillai.
20. This agreement was reached during a meeting of the two groups on 28 January 1925.
21. The Congress leader, D.S.Senanayake, attempted to explain away the 'pact' during a public meeting on the 16 December 1927, S.W.R.D.Bandaranaike (ed), The Handbook of the Ceylon National Congress, 1919-1928, p.872.
22. Lord Donoughmore to K.Balasingham (the Tamil Executive Councillor) during the latter's evidence before the Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.IV, p.237 ff.
23. The Unionist Party to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol. VII.
24. Sir Marcus Fernando to D.Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol. III; see also debate in the Legislative Council, 15 March 1923.
25. C.L.C., 20 March 1923 (E.R.Tambimutthu).
26. Ibid.
27. Secretary of State to Manning, 20 June 1923, Cmd. 1809.
28. Sir Marcus Fernando to D.Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.III; and Ceylon National Congress, in evidence before D.Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.I.
29. Sir Marcus Fernando, loc.cit.
30. Dr. W.P. Rodrigo, (President, Kelaniya Division Mahajana Sabha), in evidence before D.Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.II.
31. D.C. Anktell and A.M. Brodie, in evidence before D.Commission,D.C.O.S.,Vol.III
32. The All-Ceylon Tamil Conference, evidence before Commission,D.C.O.S., Vol.II.
33. Originally ventilated by a number of Christian missionaries such as the Jesuit Roberto Di Nobili (1577-1656), Constantius Beschi (1680-1743) and Robert Caldwell (1819-1891), the theory held that Tamil culture had a separate and independent existence before the Brahmans (Aryans) invaded India; that the Dravidian civilisation owed nothing to Aryan culture, but rather

gave the Aryans a ready-made civilisation. The Tamil poet S.Somasundara Bharati gave lyric expression to these ideas and helped rouse Tamil patriotism. The members of the Justice Party and the Madras Presidency Association gave these cultural ideas a political content when they used them as part of their programme in order to topple the Brahmans from their political and social sway in South India; for a stimulating study of this subject and its political, social and economic implications, see Eugene F.Irschick, Politics and Social Conflict in South India; the non-Brahman Movement and Tamil Separatism, 1916-1929, pp.280-300.

34. Irschick observes that Vellalas were of all the non-Brahman caste groups in South India the ones who were most active in the movement, and this for, at least, two reasons: first, they were the most anxious to shed their sudra designation; and second, since they formed the 'backbone' of the Justice Party their social and political resentments were closely intertwined, see Irschick, op.cit., pp. 280-300.
35. A. Canagaratnam to D.Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.I.
36. The All-Ceylon Tamil Conference to D.Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.I.
37. C. Ponnambalam, report of talk on 'Tamil Rights', in C.I., 12 November 1927.
38. A.Ramanathan, evidence before D. Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.II.
39. Some Sinhalese writers attempted an explanation for this general European tendency; they argued that the Sinhalese peasant's unwillinghess to work as hired labour had been equated with 'laziness'; indeed the equation had a great deal to do with the bitterness of the European arising from the fact that he had to import labour from India at extra cost. It was explained that, although the peasant considered working for a wage as 'degrading' and against his 'grain', he was quite willing to toil in his own land; see, for example, C.E. Corea, The Ancient Constitution and the Representation of the Peasantry, a Memorandum for the Chilaw Association to the D.Commission, in D.C.W.S., Vol. I.
40. Clifford to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 20 November 1926, C.O.537,692
41. The writings of Piyadasa Sirisena, the Editor of Sinhala Jatiya, for example, were full of such tactless references to the Tamils and the Dravidians; a whole chapter (Chapter 2) of his novel Maheswari (3rd Edition, 1959, pp.6-12) was a comparison of the qualities of the Aryan and Dravidian races: for instance, 'there are three types of trustworthy Tamils - the unborn Tamil, the dead Tamil and the one on a mural'.

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42. C.I., 2 November 1927.
43. J.E.Loduwyk, in evidence before D.Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.III, p.65.
44. H.A.P.Sandrasagara, evidence before D.Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.II, pp.230-2.
45. The Jaffna Depressed Tamil Service League to D.Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.IV.
46. The Jaffna Association, evidence before Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.III and the All-Ceylon Tamil Conference, evidence before Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.II.
47. C.I., editorial, 16 August, 1928.
48. The Jaffna Association, evidence before D.Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.III, p.90.
49. D.C.R., p. 86.
50. See Chapter VIII (on Religious Minorities).
51. Rev.Fr. P.M. Francis, Editor, The Catholic Guardian (Jaffna), to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.I.
52. S.Kulendran, (Chairman), sessions of the Students' Congress in Jaffna, C.I., 30 December 1926.
53. A.Muthuraianayagam Brodie to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.I.
54. M.S. Eliyathamby, sessions, The Students' Congress, C.I., 5 January, 1927.
55. M.S. Eliyathamby, ibid.
56. Report of proceedings of the Students' Congress, C.I., 5 January 1927.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.

60. Ibid.
61. S.Kulendran (Chairman), Sessions of the Students' Congress, C.I., 30.Dec. 1926.
62. M. Gandhi, address at public meeting at Campbell Park, Colombo, C.I., 28 Nov. 1927.
63. General Meeting of the Tamil League, C.I., 22 November 1926; see also evidence of the Jaffna Mahajana Sabha before the D. Commission, D.C.O.S. Vol.II.
64. The All-Ceylon Tamil Conference (public meeting), C.I., 17 October 1927.
65. The Tamil League, address of H.A.P.Sandrasagara, C.I., 22 November 1926.
66. Dr. Shiels to deputation of the All-Ceylon Tamil Conference, D.C.O.S., Vol. II.
67. D.C.R., p. 93.
68. A Commission headed by Lord Soulbury which visited Ceylon in December 1944 to enquire and report on Ceylon's constitutional problems. The Report of the Commission - Ceylon: Report of the Commission on Constitutional Reform, Cmd. 6677 of 1945 - came to be known as the Soulbury Commission Report; see p. 13.
69. Sir P. Ramanathan to Governor, 2 January 1930, C.O. 54,900.
70. Stanley (Governor) to Secretary of State, 26 September 1928, C.O. 54,892.
71. B.H. Bourdillon (the Colonial Secretary) to Governor, 29 December 1929, C.O. 54,900; Bourdillon observed that 'Mr. Mahadeva told me personally that he favoured the Reforms but would vote against it' (sic). In fact he voted against the Reforms.
72. The Times (London), 19 April, 1930.
73. Ibid.
74. H.R. Cowell (the Head of the Ceylon Department of the Colonial Office), minute, 23 April 1930, C.O. 54,899.
75. H.R. Cowell, minute, 23 January 1930, C.O. 54,900; Cowell wrote: 'he is an old man...and his early dissipations had not been without their result on his mental processes, although the semi-religious character of his utterances is an unusual crop from a sowing of wild oats'.
76. Sri. Ratnajoti to D.Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol. VI.
77. C.I., 2 July 1927 (editorial); an opinion which was held by most Sinhalese newspapers of the period.
78. The Administration Report of the Government Agent of the Northern Province (E.T. Dyson) for 1931.
79. Ibid.; in Mannar, however, S.M. Anantham refused to be persuaded and he was duly elected closely contested by a boycott candidate; in Mannar far away from Jaffna, the Youth League was said to be less influential.
80. Stanley to Secretary of State, 6 May 1931, C.O. 54,907.
81. Dr. Isaac Thambiah to E.T. Dyson (the G.A. Northern Province), 7 May 1931, C.O. 54,907.
82. E.T. Dyson to T. Reid (the Commissioner of Elections), 12 May 1931, C.O. 54,907.
83. Dr. Isaac Thambiah, loc.cit.; Petition of Residents of Jaffna (4500 signatures) to Governor, 14 January 1932, C.O. 54,908; Memorandum of Jaffna Residents to the Secretary of State, 13 March 1933, C.O. 54,916.
84. Governor to Secretary of State, 6 May 1931, C.O. 54,907.
85. Minutes of various officials on the boycott issue, C.O. 54,916.
86. V. Veerasingham, The Ceylon Constitution: A Constructive Criticism, (Pamphlet, 1932), pp. 8-9.
87. It was Ponnambalam Ramanathan who pleaded with the British to release a number of Sinhalese Temperance leaders - such as D.S. Senanayake and D.B. Jayatilaka - who had been jailed for allegedly fomenting the disturbances of 1915; these very same leaders were now the leading Sinhalese politicians working the Donoughmore Constitution.
88. A saying attributed to the Tamil leader Sir Ambalavanar Kanagasabai was cited by J.H.P.Vijayaratnam during the evidence of the League of Christian Citizenship of Jaffna, D.C.O.S., Vol.III, p. 155.

89. Cited from the Young India, in C.I., 14 March 1927.
90. Memorandum of the Inhabitants of Jaffna to Sir. S. Wilson (Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies), C.O. 54,916.
91. J.H.C. Pereira and E.W. Perera held this opinion in the early days of the Reform Movement.
92. V.Veerasingham, op.cit., pp. 8-10.
93. C.D.N., 15 July 1927; see also M.S. Rasaratnam to D. Commission (Memorandum 2) D.C.W.S., Vol.V.

CHAPTER III : THE INDIANS

The Indian immigrant population, which by the period under consideration had increased to over ten per cent of the population, became an explosive minority problem. Earlier, the immigrants and their problems had been mainly the concern of the European planter, the Government of India and the Colonial Government. Now, with the grant of a measure of responsible government, under Manning, and with the possibility of further political reforms - which, naturally, had to grapple with the question of the political future of the immigrants - two new interested parties appeared on the stage - the Sinhalese political elite and the political leaders in India. The Sinhalese elite stood solidly against any further political rights to the immigrants, because they were described as non-Ceylonese. Indian politicians, on the other hand, who were already agitated about the condition of Indians in other parts of the British Empire, particularly in South Africa, were determined that their compatriots should be treated in terms of strict equality with the rest of the Ceylonese.

Starting with a short survey of the condition of the immigrants - and mainly of estate labour - at the beginning of our period, the present study attempts to enquire into the main reasons behind the obvious anti-Indian attitudes of the Sinhalese elite and the opposition to the Indians' political emancipation. The study also proceeds to consider the immediate impact of the announcement of the sessions and of the Report of the Donoughmore Commission on the immigrant problem, with special emphasis on the political conflict the Report's solution was to engender; a conflict, involving the Government of India, the Government of Ceylon, the Colonial Office, the India Office, the politicians of India and the Sinhalese political elite, which seemed to be caused by a number of issues that had little to do with the immigrants themselves.

That the seriousness of the problems of Indian immigrant labour had been recognized, was evident from the legislation that had come into force through the years. Most of this legislation had, no doubt, been due to the pressure of the Government of India in their nationals' regard. Among this legislation, the Ordinance No. 1 of 1923 is of deep significance. This Ordinance created the office of the Controller of Indian Immigrant Labour, whose task was to enquire into conditions of life among the Indian immigrant labourers and satisfy himself about their housing accommodation and the provision for medical treatment of such labourers. The same enactment sanctioned the appointment of an Agent of the Government of India in Ceylon - the Indian Agent as he was later to be known. The Controller of Indian Immigrant Labour was empowered to visit and inspect the conditions of labour and the Indian Agent, who was said to be an 'observer' for India, was also afforded the right of entry and inspection of estates and report on conditions of labour to the Governments of India and of Ceylon. The 1923 Ordinance also provided for the establishment, as an advisory body, of a Board of Indian Immigrant Labour to be constituted by the representatives of the Government of Ceylon and of various organisations involved with Indian labour.

The legislation of the 1920's achieved much. Besides the major achievement of the setting up of machinery to ensure reasonable conditions for the labourer, much that had operated to his prejudice was removed. Notable among the achievements were the remedying of a class of labour grievances: the undermining of the influence and power of the ruthless Kangani (Indian supervisor) System; and particularly, the removal of a species of 'hardships', such as the notorious system of 'planters' warrants'which enabled the planters to arrest labourers for breaches of civil contracts, neglect of duty and even for an all-embracing offence known as 'insolence'.[1]

Such legislation, however, had not been achieved without opposition from the European planting community. Ceylon's Ordinance No. 1 of 1923, for instance, had its beginnings in the draft of a comprehensive ordinance, in

1919, by the then Attorney General, Henry Gollan. It was shelved, so it was maintained, by the 'magic influence' of the Ceylon Association in London - an association of European planters in London - and revived only 'under pressure' from the Government of India, and finally accepted by the planting community 'with much bitterness'.[2] Such opposition was more evident in the introduction of the Minimum Wages Ordinance of 1927. All the provisions of the Ordinance with the exception of the one relating to the payment of minimum rates of wages came into force in December 1927. The latter could not be brought into effect immediately, as Estates Wages Boards had first to be constituted. In the face of solid opposition from the planters the awards of the Estates Wages Boards came into force only in 1929. The Indian Agent bitingly commented that delaying tactics had kept the Ordinance in a 'state of suspended animation' for a long while, thus postponing the benefits of the awards to the poor labourers.[3]

However, in the implementation of the legislation and, particularly, in the actual appointments to key positions the Government left much room for criticism. The Indian elite in Ceylon - drawn mainly from the Indian commercial community in Colombo - were quick to assert that the Controller, T. Reid, was a senior European Civil Servant and a 'great friend of the planter';[4] that the Board of Indian Immigrant Labour was 'packed' with Europeans and that the labourer was barely represented. Indeed, of the eleven Members of the Board in the 1927-1928 period, for instance, nine were Europeans, one a Low-country Sinhalese planter representing the Low-country Products Association and one Indian - the First Indian Member of the Legislative Council, who represented more Colombo's Indian commercial interest than the Indian labourer.[5] Nor did the various appointees help abate criticism. The Controller, Reid, for instance, often seemed to consider himself the champion of the planter; his Administrative Reports contained favourable accounts of the condition of the labourers: the labourers and their children were said to be 'well nourished and happy'; the attitude of the planters to the labourers was said to be invariably 'humane', 'most praiseworthy' and friendly.[6]

Whatever the criticism, there could be no doubt in the mind of any independent observer that the sum of achievement of the various structures set up under the new legislation, particularly of the Department of the Controller of Indian Immigrant Labour, was most praiseworthy. No one could mistake the efforts of these various bodies and the results of their efforts in the amelioration of the condition of the labourer. When viewed in the context of Ceylon's planting industry and the sense of independence the planters were used to, one could see that Reid's apparent 'friendliness' and that of his Department to the European planter was only calculated to obtain the most favourable conditions for the labourer.

Through elaborate machinery set up for the purpose, the Controller's Department ensured fair conditions for the labourer from the moment of recruitment in South India, through his long journey to the estates and even in his day-to-day living in the estates.

Although recruitment continued to be mainly through a system of recruiting Kanganis, strict control ensured the reduction of many of the irregularities that had occurred in the past. The strict control of this system was evident from the fact that in 1928, for instance, while 20,326 licences were issued, some 388 licences applied for were refused by the Controller on account of various irregularities. In 1928, also, the names of 345 Kanganis were in the Controller's permanent black list for various irregularities committed and 42 licensed kanganis were actually prosecuted for various offences, of whom 25 were convicted.[7]

Recent legislation had also helped improve the living conditions of the Indian labourers on the estates. The housing return showed that the average number of labourers occupying each room was 3.63 in 1928 as compared with over 5 in 1920. There was also the tendency to avoid the construction of back to back 'lines', which the Director of Medical and Sanitary Services had condemned in 1927. The Controller's comments on the improvements by way of latrines and pipe-borne water to the estate lines were optimistic: 'possibly

the most remarkable public health revolution ever accomplished in Ceylon in so brief a period and reflects the greatest credit to all concerned with the planting industry'.[8]

Even working conditions had improved. The labourer had work all the year round; picking of leaf on tea estates was on piece work rates and if perquisities were included the monthly income was enhanced by a fair proportion. They worked on an average about 19 days per month. The Minimum Wage Ordinance, also of this period, fulfilled a long-felt need and assured the labourer of a reasonable wage for his work. Even the Indian Agent, M.A.S. Hydari, could not but admit that the labourers' economic condition had improved tremendously; he commented that the labourer

> 'had work all the year round, he has enough to eat, and to clothe himself in a simple way, and though somewhat regimented, he lives in a decent room; he has, moreover, in most cases the advantage of a not unhealthy climate'.[9]

There was, on the whole, a clear improvement in medical facilities too. The Medical Ordinance of 1912 had already placed on the planters the legal duty of providing medical aid for labourers and of providing free maternity benefits to their wives. Although the Indian Agent pointed out various deficiencies of the system, and particularly the disturbing figures of infantile mortality,[10] the Controller seemed satisfied that the planters' obligations were 'more than observed in practice'.[11]

As regards education of Indian children on estates, the Controller reported 'remarkable progress'. The number of estate schools registered - with grants-in-aid from the Government - and unregistered, had indeed increased steadily.[12] The Reports, however, admitted the 'woeful illiteracy' among the estate population, a condition that 'was bound to be so for a long time' as any education of the estate population 'had started only now'. Two factors - their lack of desire for education and the floating nature of the population - were said to be in the way of a steady education for the children.[13] The Indian Agent, however, expressed the need to provide some measure of vocational education to train the child 'destined for an agricultural life in the duties

he will have to perform, and conversely as to the rights he should look to enjoy.[14]

There were other effects of legislation. Most planters were said to look back with regret to the days when Ordinance did not trouble them. Indeed, there was little doubt that the planters resented the new developments. With the contract of service, as between the labourer and the planter, regulated by statute, it was only to be expected that this should in some measure detract from the old personal relationship between the employer and employee. Even a 'certain amount of discomfort' was said to be felt by both parties in this new relationship.[15] The old patriarchal system, which had already been threatened in the passing of most estates from proprietary planters into the hands of employees of limited liability companies in England, had now almost disappeared at the impact of legislation.

Although by the period under review the general economic and social conditions of the labourer had improved, the Indian Agent observed - and here the Controller agreed with him too - that the labourer's situation was 'susceptible of improvement' especially at the level of his 'moral and mental uplift'. The Agent observed, for instance, that except for marriages and festivals, which were 'merely interludes' in his drab life, there was hardly any opportunity for 'wholesome pleasure' and a 'wider life'. Indeed, the goal of a 'measure of happiness other than the mere happiness of being well-fed' had yet to be achieved.[16]

The twenties, too, witnessed the improvement in the political status of the immigrants. The Manning Reforms, in 1924, for the first time, granted political representation to the Indians by way of two communal seats. The Reforms, in fact,treated the Indians in terms of equality with the rest of the communities, and this in spite of the fact that they were considered to be aliens; the very definition of the term "Indian" incorporated in the Order in Council (1924) marked them out as non-Ceylonese. An Indian was defined to be,

> 'any person who is a native of British India or of the territories of any Native Prince or Chief under the suzerainty of His Majesty exercised through the Governor-General of India or through the Governor or other Officer subordinate to the Governor-General of India and is a resident of Ceylon, but is not domiciled therein'.

Indians, indeed, could not with any justification complain of any discrimination in the 1924 Order in Council in their regard, except in a detail, perhaps inadvertently made and recognised as an 'accidental omission' by the Indians themselves:[17] the literacy test as laid down in the Order in Council recognised literacy only in English, Sinhalese and Tamil; this had the effect of rendering ineligible Indians who were literate in other languages - particularly those who were literate in Malayalam. The Government, however, was not prepared to rectify this 'error' despite sustained agitation by the Malayali section of the Indians.

It is significant that when Manning granted two communal seats to the Indians there was hardly a protest from the Sinhalese elite. The question of two seats perhaps did not seem important, when by a limited franchise based on property (or income) and educational qualifications, the vote would have been expected to be limited to a few kanganis and kanakkapullais (estate accountants) and a few from the mainly urban-based Indian commercial community. Indeed, under the Manning dispensation the number of registered voters in the territorial electorates for the whole Island was 172,583 while the number of voters for all the communal electorates (European, Burgher, Muslim, Indian and Tamils of the Western Province) was only 32,414 of which the Indian electorate made up 12,901.

It is, however, during the period under consideration, that the country came to witness the reality of the anti-Indian feeling of the Sinhalese elites;the Donoughmore Commission, or at least the discussion of further political concessions to the immigrants around its sessions, and the actual proposal for the enfranchisement of the Indians in its Report, seems to have been the occasion for the eruption of hostility. Here two questions present themselves: first, was this hostility unaccountable or was it of gradual growth, and if of gradual growth, what were the reasons for such a

development?; and second, why did this hostility erupt when it did, during the Donoughmore Commission period? The second question will be examined elsewhere in this study - when it will be discussed along with the Report's proposals on the Indians. The first question will be discussed here, and it could provide the necessary background to the understanding of the Indian minority and its problems.

At least three social factors provided the setting for the growth of feelings of hostility: the social isolation of the Indians itself; the nature of occupations the Indians were engaged in, which were said to be 'degrading'; and a notion among the Sinhalese, obviously prejudiced, that the Indians were a 'menace' to the 'physical and moral health' of the nation.

The social isolation of the Indians was, of course, a fact. Their life had been so ordered by their masters that the Sinhalese had barely an opportunity to be interested in their affairs and, for that matter, for them to be interested in the affairs of the Sinhalese. The Indians had been so provided, within their estate enclaves, with lines for their living, schools for their children, hospitals and dispensaries for their sick, estate 'boutiques' for their provisions and temples for their worship, that any integration with the native village population - indeed, all estates were so surrounded by villages - was not seen to be necessary. The paternalistic planter, on the other hand, resented any interference in his domain by any 'outsiders'[18] The first ovbious effect of this 'enforced' isolation was to create among the Sinhalese a sense of indifference to the Indians and their problems; and a tendency to consider their affairs as the responsibility of the British who brought them in and of India whose nationals they were. But this condition of isolation also provided the setting for the growth of prejudice.

A second social factor provided a basis for the avoidance of the Indian by the Sinhalese; this was the 'degrading' nature of the work that some Indians were engaged in. The fact that the Indians who were in municipal and urban services were engaged in lowly avocations, often performing duties that most Sinhalese

considered 'too dirty' to engage in, such as removing night soil and cleaning the streets, had no doubt tended to downgrade them in their eyes. This prejudice was evident even among the ordinary Sinhalese; a medical officer who advised some Sinhalese villagers to give goat's milk to their anaemic children was reported to have been told that this would be unthinkable since the "coolies" - meaning Indians - give goat's milk to their children and it would therefore be too degrading.[19] An Indian journalist in Ceylon, Nihal Singh, was bitter indeed that his countrymen had 'fallen so low' in the eyes of the Ceylonese: that 'the "Cooly" and "Indian" are synonymous in Ceylon', and that India was regarded the land of their 'sweepers and scavengers'.[20] In this connection too, an exasperated Indian businessman cited Sir T.B. Sapru to protest that 'Indians are not a nation of coolies'.[21] Such generalisations about the Indians were indeed unreasonable since the great majority of the Indians - the estate labourers, who constituted over 75 per cent of the Indian population in Ceylon - were not engaged in 'lowly avocations'; but the prejudice seemed to thrive because the more vocal urban-based Sinhalese were more familiar with the work of the urban cooly than that of the estate labourer.

From such prejudice it was only one further step to consider the Indian a 'menace' to the physical and moral health of the nation. There were suggestions that 'sexual promiscuity', 'prostitution', 'consumption and venereal disease' were widespread among the Indian population because of their 'low standard of life'. It is significant, however, that these allegations often had their origin among Ceylonese workmen who considered the Indian to be 'undermining the moral standard of the labouring classes'.[22] Such allegations were applicable, if at all, mainly to the urban Indian labourers. If medical reports were to be believed such generalisations were unfounded in the case of estate labourers.[23] The high rate of tuberculosis and venereal disease among the Indian urban workers was indeed a fact. A spokesman for the Indians, a medical doctor, was to attribute this to their situation: 'their en-

vironments are such' he argued ' that they easily fall a prey to temptation'.[24]

Economic factors, also, contributed to this growth of anti-Indian feeling. At least two such could be identified: the problem of land hunger of the Sinhalese - and mainly the Kandyan - population, estate labour being identified with the planting interest; and the problem of unemployment among the Sinhalese workers.

The problem of land hunger for an expanding, mainly Kandyan, population chiefly because of the expansion of the plantation industry in the fertile wet zone of the country is discussed elsewhere in this study;[25] suffice it to mention here that the problem was so serious that during the period under consideration a concerned Administration took a number of steps to prevent indiscriminate sale of lands to the plantation industry. The agricultural peasantry, short of land, viewed these vast expanses of plantations around them with intense aversion. In this context it was inevitable that the immigrants, who formed an essential part of the plantation system, came to be looked upon with suspicion by the native peasantry; perhaps, in the peasantry's view the immigrant, who was more frequently heard and seen than the European planters, was more an object of suspicion than their masters. This suspicion was, for instance, evident in Kandyan complaints; a Kandyan pamphlet lamented that their lands were 'betrayed' to

> 'foreign investors, who employ imported labour and carry away between them all the wealth derived from such lands leaving nothing behind...'

and that they who were 'invaded on all sides by strangers' have 'felt the full force of this attack' more than any other group.[26] The peasant discontent arising out of the plantation system, and the connected suspicion of the immigrant, provided the political potential which was to be tapped later by the Sinhalese elite against Indian enfranchisement and for the purpose of halting immigration.

The problem of unemployment in the country provided another reason for the growth of anti-Indian feeling among the Sinhalese. The Sinhalese elite often attributed the problem of chronic unemployment to the presence of

Indian labour. Here, some Sinhalese elite who had recently taken a special interest in the affairs of the vocal Sinhalese urban labour were the spokesmen. Their analysis was that Ceylonese unemployment was due to the 'unjust competition' offered by Indian labourers; these publicists argued that the Indian labourers, because of their 'low standard of living', their 'docile nature' and their willingness to work for low wages, were preferred to Sinhalese labour by the European planters and the Government. These spokesmen calculated - in the absence of reliable figures- that about 95 per cent of the labour in the Harbour Works, 33 per cent of the Railway Workshop and about 33 per cent in the Government Factory were Indians; and this, when over '10,000 men of the soil in Colombo were without employment.[27] D.B. Jayatilaka declared in the Legislative Council that Indian unskilled labour was coming over to Ceylon in large numbers and 'ousting the local man'; he pointed out the duty of the Government to employ local labour before they import labour from South India. D.S. Senanayake, also in the Council, spoke of the 'insensitiveness' of the Government to the problem of unemployment; he observed that,

> 'whenever strikes break out, I find that it leads to more people from India coming over here and taking the bread from the mouth of our countrymen'.[28]

The connection between the Indian immigrant and the problem of unemployment is of course arguable. The Sinhalese elite's argument that the Government preferred Indian labour because it is 'cheap and convenient' seems to be well-founded when one considers the large numbers of unassisted Indian labourers who were provided with employment by the Government;[29] the argument, however, had an important weakness: the elite never questioned whether the Sinhalese labourers were willing or available to fill a greater proportion of the jobs which the Indians were prepared to perform; indeed, it is doubtful if the Sinhalese labourers were even prepared to consider work such as the scavenging services which the Indians performed uncomplainingly. Whatever its weaknesses and contradictions, the very voicing of the argument was indicative of the extent of feeling against the Indians.

Besides these social and economic reasons there were also some cultural reasons for the growth of hostility. One reason was the unwillingness of the Indian to 'feel with' the country; such unwillingness was evidently viewed with suspicion in an age of national awakening. A Kandyan alleged that these Indians, though they lived 'next door to the village', had 'nothing in common with it'; and while 'they always felt that India was their home and took the first opportunity to go back', even their interests were 'keenly guarded by the powerful Government of India'.[30] That this allegation was well-founded was evident from the fact that even the Indian leaders in Ceylon agreed that this was so; K. Natesa Aiyer, the second Indian Communal Member in the Legislative Council, admitted that the labourers were not aware of what was happening around them as 'even the newspapers they read are Indian newspapers'; the labourer, he added, never pretends to be of any other country or race and 'takes pride in calling himself an Indian'.[31] The Sinhalese tendency to term the Indians 'birds of passage' and 'sojourners' and to satirize the Indians' annual visit to India as the 'pilgrimage' or the 'exodus' was evidently symptomatic of their view that the Indians were 'outsiders' who do not belong to the country. That there was no de facto integration was a fact; but there was barely any enquiry why this was so, whether, for instance, the Indians had an opportunity to be so integrated with the rest of the population. Two factors, at least, seem to indicate that they had not the opportunity: for one thing, owing to the circumstances of their work and their living within estate enclaves, they had little contact with the Sinhalese; and, for another, there is no evidence that the Sinhalese provided the opportunity or even the incentive for such an integration.

St. Nihal Singh who probed this Sinhalese antagonism found another cultural reason in what he called 'racial and religious animosity'; it so happened, he argued,

> 'that almost all the Indians in Ceylon are Tamils - mostly Hindu Tamils - and in them the excitable Sinhalese see their traditional enemies - or at least a progeny of their ancient enemies who invaded Ceylon again and again and destroyed temples and palaces. Some Sinhalese - most of them

> irresponsible, no doubt - never tire of making references to episodes of this character - episodes which took place thousands or at least hundreds of years ago'.[32]

This could very well be true; the idea of the 'Indian invader' so popular in Sinhalese folk tradition could not have been altogether absent from their assessment of the Indians around them. To this view may be added a caste factor: that the Sinhalese were aware - they had only to read the Reports of the Controller of Indian Immigrant Labour, which always provided a statement showing the different castes of the immigrants - that about 50 per cent of the immigrants were from the "depressed classes" and of them a fair proportion were "untouchables".[33] In such caste-conscious areas as the Kandyan Provinces, where most of the estates were situated, this caste factor could indeed have relevance in the Sinhalese feelings towards the immigrants.

It was amidst this state of feeling against the Indians in Ceylon that the Donoughmore Commission arrived. As the sessions progressed the Commissioners would have noticed, as the country also no doubt did, that the Indians were poorly represented in evidence before them; and that the few deputations that appeared represented and spoke more for the tiny minority (less than 5 per cent of the Indian population) of Indian commercial interest[34] than for the large majority of Indian - estate and urban - labour. Indeed, a listing of the deputations of Indians which appeared before the Commission reveals this fact: the leading Indian group, the Ceylon Indian Association, which was already in existence before the arrival of the Commission, was an organisation dominated by Colombo's Indian business community and was led by a leading Colombo businessman, I.X. Pereira, who was also the senior Indian Member of the Legislative Council; another group which gave evidence was the Indian Association of Kandy which represented the Indian mercantile interest in Kandy; a third group, the Ceylon Indian Congress was, during this period, a little known association of Indian elite whose President was Dr. I. David who claimed to have held that office for some ten years; and the only group which could claim some connection with the labourers, the Head Kanganis Association, was observed to speak mainly for the supervisory class of Indian labour.

The case of these groups before the Commission was mainly a demand for the retention of communal representation and the increase of it from the existing two to five (Ceylon Indian Association) or even to seven (Indian Association of Kandy) Indian communal seats in a reformed Legislature. That the demand for increased communal representation was to safeguard their own commercial interests, and barely for the interests of the labourers, is evident from an analysis of the evidence; Dr. I. David's argument for representation seemed to sum up the main case of all the other groups:

> 'the Sinhalese finding our trade progressing and that we are increasing in numbers, think it is the thin edge of the wedge we are driving, but we are trying to keep up our rights and demand adequate representation'.[35]

This same preoccupation became evident in the Ceylon Indian Association's distribution of its proposed five seats; the five seats were to be made up of: a Colombo seat, an urban seat, an Up-country rural seat, a Low-country rural seat and a seat for Indians other than South Indians. It is evident that with the exception perhaps of the two rural seats (Up-country and Low-country), the three other seats had been carefully worked out to bring in the representatives of the influential commercial element: with a franchise limited by property and literacy qualifications, the Colombo seat and the urban seat would obviously be captured by the urban-based mercantile element, while the seat proposed for the Indians other than South Indians was ideally suited for the influential Borah, Parsi, Afghan and other commercial communities in Colombo and other leading towns.

It is not that the political future of the labourers was not spoken about at all; indeed their situation was mentioned, but clearly tangentially. This was no doubt the view also of the Indian Agent in Ceylon, who made an obviously barbed reference to these associations' role, in his Report for 1928:

> 'Associations are no doubt being formed but they have almost without exception political aims alone; they should also, if they are to confer any real benefit on the men and women whose suffrage they are out to obtain, have a social service side as well...'.[36]

In keeping with their determination, as observed earlier, to abolish communal representation from the face of Ceylonese politics, the Commissioners,

in their Report, did not see any 'good reason why seats for Indian communal representatives should any longer be set aside in the Legislative Council'. They thus did away with the two communal seats but hoped that 'under the territorial system some representatives of this community would be elected'. In support of their decision they argued the doubtful function of the two present representatives: since it was 'fairly clear' that 'one of the strongest influences in securing benefits for the Indians' had been the 'pressure' of the Indian Government; which they felt would 'continue to be exercised' anyway.[37]

But while the Report recommended universal manhood suffrage and a limited measure of womanhood suffrage (over the age of 30), they had two reservations which should be mentioned here because of their relevance to the study of the Indians:

> 'in the first place we consider it very desirable that a qualification of five years' residence in the Island (allowing for temporary absences not exceeding eight months in all during the five-year period) should be introduced in order that the privilege of voting should be confined to those who have an abiding interest in the country or who may be regarded as permanently settled in the Island'.

That this reservation was clearly directed to the Indian community, was evident from a comment which the Commissioners were careful to add:

> 'as will be seen later, this condition will be of particular importance in its application to the Indian immigrant population'.

The second reservation was that the Commissioners considered that:

> 'the registration of voters should not be compulsory or automatic but should be restricted to those who apply for it, the method of application being of course definitely laid down and widely published'.

The Indian elites' interpretation was that this reservation too had been specially 'manufactured' to keep down the number of Indian voters. These Indian spokesmen gave as a reason for this interpretation the special isolated condition of the Indian labourer:

> 'huddled in one room "lines" situated in private property from which ingress and egress are regulated according to the will - and even the whim - of the owners, they would find it difficult to get away and register, unless, of course, it suited the planters to have them registered, in which case, however, their vote would be used to fasten upon them tighter than ever the shackles of semi-serfdom'.[38]

This does seem indeed a harsh interpretation which the evidence does not

warrant. This reservation was introduced with the expressed hope of 'ensuring that a potential elector is not given the vote until he has learned to appreciate its value'. At the most, it was symptomatic of their own doubts and their nervousness about criticism in Ceylon as well as in Britain about so radical a step as providing universal franchise to the 'illiterate masses'.[39]

The Manning plan of 1924, as observed earlier, had avoided a head-on collision with the anti-Indian element in Ceylon by conceding only two communal seats to the Indians. Manning perhaps realised that any talk of bringing the Indian into the general electorate was to court confrontation with this element. That even Donoughmore sensed this aspect of the problem is evident from the limitation - the qualification of five years' residence in the Island - he placed on the Indian franchise. The anti-Indian forces, however, were not to be satisfied with this limitation. It was considered to be an indirect method of bringing the Indian into the general electorate. Hence the bitter conflict around the Indian and his vote.

The anti-Indian publicists accused the Commissioners of a lack of appreciation of the 'ideals and aspirations' of the Ceylonese to form a united nation. The 'sudden foisting' of a million 'foreigners' on five million natives would be intolerable to any nation, they argued. W.A. de Silva, who led the movement hypothesized:

> 'it has been said that in England any British subject who has resided there for a certain time has the same rights as a British citizen and can exercise the vote. But if five million Indians or Chinese go and reside in England and try to exercise the vote, you will soon find the English people not so ready to concede it. When there are half a dozen, ten or a hundred what does it matter?'[40]

The vote to the Indian, warned a Kandyan, 'would be the death-knell of the nation!'[41] The Donoughmore proposals had been given them, said another, as a 'long rope to hang themselves with'.[42]

The Donoughmore plan to enfranchise the Indians and to bring them into the general electorate generated deep resentment among the Sinhalese elite - traditional and new - generally. There was no doubt as to the strength of feeling against the move among both the less moderate as well as the moderate.

This raised the question of motives. What caused all this resentment?

The Sinhalese elite based their opposition on a political argument: that the Indians were non-Ceylonese; that they were mere 'birds of passage' and 'sojourners' who have 'no abiding interest' in the land; and that their enfranchisement would 'swamp' the 'permanent population'.

It was necessary for the argument that the migratory nature of the immigrants be emphasized. They were said to be foreigners who worked for foreigners and took their earnings with them in their annual visits to their homes across the water .[43] The Sinhalese elite argued that 'almost all' the immigrants were migratory and hence not permanently settled in the Island. This was of course doubtful. The Indian elite, for instance, insisted that 40 per cent (K. Natesa Aiyer) or even 80 per cent (I.X. Pereira) of the Indians were permanently settled in the Island. An exact calculation did not seem possible because the only figures available - those of arrivals and departures and the net flow of immigration[44] - were of little help in any calculation of those permanently settled in the Island. These figures were, nevertheless, bandied about by the opposing groups - the Sinhalese elite and the Indian elite - to demonstrate the migratory or non-migratory nature of the Indian population. Actually the figures only revealed that there was a net flow of immigration, that is excess of arrivals over departures annually. The Controller, at least, seemed satisfied that 40-50 per cent were permanently settled and that about 25 per cent were actually born in Ceylon, and hence, he observed, it would be 'unjust to the Indians to say' that they are a 'purely migratory population'.[45] Following the Controller, the Commissioners settled for '40-50 per cent'.[46]

Then there was the second aspect of the argument that there was a great danger of 'swamping' the 'permanent population' in the event of Indian enfranchisement. This was the line of argument followed by D.B. Jayatilaka, who visited the Colonial Office to present the case of the Sinhalese elite.[47] But how was Indian enfranchisement connected with the swamping or the 'political submersion' of the permanent population? The Sinhalese argument

was that there was a concentration of Indians in Sinhalese - and mainly Kandyan - areas of the Central, Uva and Sabaragamuwa Provinces and that the Indian votes would be, under Indian direction, swayed as a bloc against the Sinhalese.[48]

Perhaps to create maximum effect on the Government and the Colonial Office, the latter aspect of 'Indian direction' was carefully explained: there was a possibility of 'manipulation' of the Indian electorate by 'agitators' or 'political adventurers' from 'across the Palk Strait' (India). The Sinhalese elite could not have been altogether unaware of the Government's and the European planters' nervousness at the mere mention of the British Indian agitator when they put forward this argument. Indeed this was the one argument which created the greatest impact on the Government and the Colonial Office. The Governor, for instance, did not like, what he called, these 'high caste personages from beyond the Palk Strait': because, if they came to Ceylon, and 'if they thought it worthwhile they might manipulate' the Indian labourer 'for purposes and in interests not necessarily appertaining to Ceylon nor unaffected by tendencies which neither Ceylonese nor Europeans would wish to see introduced'. In fact, to the Governor such manipulation from India seemed a real danger considering the condition of the Indian labourer:

> 'the general circumstances of their lives certainly are less conducive to the formation of an independent judgment, and no more to the formation of a specifically Ceylonese outlook on public affairs'.[49]

Even the Colonial Office officialdom heartily agreed that this character - the Indian agitator - if he did come, would be 'of a type not yet familiar to Ceylon'.[50]

Indeed the fear was not without foundation. The activities of some of the Indian elite already in Ceylon were not calculated to assure the Ceylonese, the Government and the Colonial Office that their fears were unfounded. Sir Hugh Clifford's comments on Natesa Aiyer, in 1926, for instance, could not have been without effect on Colonial Office thinking; Aiyer, Clifford observed,

'was a Brahmin editor of a vernacular newspaper of pronounced Anglophobe views, whose chief object appears to be to stir up mischief between the planters and their labour forces. He may be expected to try to import into Ceylon as much of the bitterness that characterises the extremist parties in British India as he may be able to excite.... The fact that he was elected, however, must be regarded as, in some measure symptomatic...'[51]

But perhaps no one brought alive the picture of the Indian agitator and the fear of his possible advent in Ceylon politics more than the man who took upon himself to fight the cause of the Indian in Ceylon - St. Nihal Singh. While, in his newspaper campaign, he succeeded in rousing British India's opinion to near-hysteria, he also angered the Sinhalese elite by his, perhaps tactless, journalism. He was said to be attempting to attain his purposes by driving a wedge between the Sinhalese elite; Singh's references to two already estranged Sinhalese Legislative Councillors - W.A. de Silva and F.A. Obeysekera - could be interpreted as such an attempt; referring to the two politicians' divergence of opinion - Silva leading the anti-Indian opposition and Obeysekera sympathetic to Indian enfranchisement - Singh commented:

'Mr. Obeysekera, I may state, comes from a family which is held in high esteem in the Island. He is Goyigama by caste, which is considered higher than Karawa, to which Mr. Silva belongs. Mr. Obeysekera is a Christian while Mr. de Silva is a Buddhist. Two clansmen of Mr. de Silva opposed Mr. Obeysekera at the last election but failed to keep him out of the Council. Both the legislators are adherents of the Ceylon National Congress, but by birth, breeding, life, experience and religion they are poles apart in thought and methods of work'.[52]

The fears of Indian manipulation of Ceylon's affairs through the Indian electorate were also enhanced by the doubts cast on the 'abiding interest' in Ceylon of the Indian leaders already in Ceylon. The haste with which the two Indian Councillors - I.X. Pereira and Natesa Aiyer - 'rushed off' to India to seek help on the Indian franchise question was, indeed, a case in point. Even the perceptive Cowell of the Colonial Office saw the implications of such actions; writing about Pereira's attitude, Cowell noted:

'Mr. Pereira writes throughout as an Indian and not as a Member of the Legislative Council of Ceylon, representing the Indian residents of the Island. He took no part in the debate...but immediately rushed off to lay his protest before the Government of India. This is precisely the course of action which is so resented by the Ceylonese, and which causes them to fear, perhaps unduly, any large increase in the Indian vote, which they think and clearly with some justification will be swayed almost entirely from India, and will have very little regard to the interests of Ceylon'.[53]

The Indian elite, of course, attempted to argue the foolishness of this fear of the 'Indian agitator'. Singh, for instance, dismissed this whole idea as a 'yarn spun by some imaginative Sinhalese' by which he obviously meant that the Indian agitator was a creation of the Sinhalese to discourage the British from extending the franchise to the Indians. Even Lord Irwin, the Viceroy of India, echoed this opinion when he observed that there was no danger to Ceylon from 'political adventurers from India' because they were busy enough in India, anyway; and in any case, 'India affords sufficient scope for the political ambitions of Indians'.[54]

However, there was a deeper motive in the Sinhalese opposition to the Indian franchise. This was the fear that, with or without the Indian agitator, the European planters would sway the Indian electorate as a bloc. Such fears - the possible manipulation of the electorate by the planters - were not altogether unfounded. Natesa Aiyer referred to his own experience of contesting the Indian communal seat in 1924 when he spoke of the 'iron rule' within the estates; he alleged that the labourers were prevented from holding public meetings; that election literature was confiscated and that the labourers were not granted leave to go and vote; the labourers were said to be frightened to protest about such practices because they feared 'reprisals'.[55]

In sum, therefore, the case against Indian franchise was one based mainly on the fears of the Sinhalese political elite that the new move would mean an embargo on their political ambitions in areas which had been traditionally Sinhalese. And these elite were prepared to appeal to the latent anti-Indian feelings of the masses to emphasise their opposition. The trend and the tone of the vehement campaign indicated this determination. And in the hands of the more extremist element the campaign took the form of emotive and immoderate references to sensitive areas of history and culture; for instance, during a public meeting of the Ceylon National Congress, a speaker, C.E. Bulathsinhala, spoke of a 'burning sense of indignation' at the offer of franchise to the Indians; his contention was that the Sinhalese who had been a 'sovereign nation for 25 centuries' had kept the Indians 'at arm's length'; whereas now, the

'glorious prospect of peaceful penetration was offered them by the Donoughmore Report'. The move was said to be intolerable because,

> 'who else but the Indian invader was responsible for the wilderness of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa?'

Bulathsinhala's conclusion was emotion-packed; appealing for a unanimous vote of the Congress against the Indian franchise he said,

> 'posterity will curse you. Your children will spit on your tombs if you commit this crime against history and give the vote to the Indians. Let your decision be such, that when you go home you will be able to take your sons and your daughters in your arms and say - "children, we have made Lanka safe for your progeny"' (loud cheers)[56]

It is significant that no outright condemnation of such appeals was heard from Congress leaders who were present in strength during that meeting. Indeed, many a Congress leader only added fuel to the anti-Indian fire by their utterances; W.A. de Silva, for example, alleging that the Indians were more loyal to India than to Ceylon observed that 'no man can have two mothers'; he also described the Indians as 'a million parasites' in the land.[57]

Some alarmed Indians wondered whether such talk would lead to another 1915 - when a riot had broken out between Sinhalese Buddhists and Muslims; commented an Indian writer:

> 'they are stirring up religious prejudices and reviving historic animosities in 1928 just as they did in 1915. Only the Indian in their midst - and not the "Tambi" (Muslim) - is the target of their malignity, which may recoil upon them as it did during the last decade'.[58]

An Indian elite too who probed the Sinhalese attitude found their own reasons for the anti-Indian moves: one reason was that the opposition stemmed from a 'species of jealousy'; that the Sinhalese could not stomach the fact that the Indians were 'workers and not shirkers', were 'industrious, persevering and thrifty' which they [Sinhalese] were not; a fact which was said to make the Europeans trust the Indians so much. A second reason was that some Ceylonese sensing that their Island was about to become a self-governing dominion - and being a 'very imitative people' - had already started to model upon the dominion pattern their conduct towards the strangers within their gates. This contention did have some foundation in the utterances of some Sinhalese politicians: D.S. Senanayake often referred to the 'Kenya experience' where 'white colonists

resorted to differentiation'; and A.C.G. Wijekoon, another Legislative Councillor, was reported to have advocated the taking of a 'leaf out of Australia's book'.[59]

Even the more moderate Sinhalese elite who claimed that they welcomed the Donoughmore plan of manhood suffrage and limited womanhood suffrage took exception to the five-year residential qualification for the Indians. While 'abiding interest' was conceded to be a reasonable ground for franchise, they did not agree that five-years' residence was any indication of 'abiding interest' in the country. Searching for a device to limit the Indian vote - during months of acrimonious discussion in the Legislative Council and outside it - they settled on the literacy qualification to be added on to the proposed five-year qualification. While this move was ostensibly for 'non-Ceylonese British subjects', the mover's - A.F. Molamure (a Kandyan) - intentions became clear when he admitted that it was 'with the object of keeping out a large number of Indian voters';[60] Molamure calculated that about one-fourth of the Indian adults were literate. But the literacy test he proposed - the ability to read and write in 'one of the languages of this country: English, Sinhalese and Tamil' - seemed to disqualify a further segment of the Indians literate in other languages such as Malayalam.

Molamure had an alternative proposal; a residential qualification of one year - instead of the five years recommended by the Commissioners - and the imposition of a literacy qualification plus a property (or income) qualification. The alternative proposal was, by Molamure's own admission, a concession to - and therefore a way of obtaining the support of - the Europeans and the propertied Indian commercial community.[61] In truth, the alternative proposal was ideally suited to the Europeans, who had been smarting under the five-year residential qualification imposed by the Commissioners, and for whom property and literacy qualifications were no problems. The Indian elite's reaction to Molamure's alternative proposal was to be expected: that it had been designed to heap additional handicaps on the Indians and to split their ranks - by cajoling the propertied and educated Indians to leave their poor countrymen in the lurch.

What ensued was a tense drama of moves, counter-moves, discussions and compromises. Significantly, the group of unofficial European Members of the Legislative Council led by T.L. Villiers was at the centre of the events. In a discussion in the Tea Room, Villiers succeeded in persuading Molamure to withdraw his literacy qualification for non-Ceylonese in favour of a proposal by E.R. Tambimutthu - the only Tamil Member who opposed wholesale Indian enfranchisement - to introduce a literacy qualification for all voters in Ceylon.[62]

After six divisions on various motions and amendments relative to franchise, the final result was the adoption of a motion which read as follows:

> 'This Council accepts the recommendations of the Donoughmore Commission as regards the extension of the franchise subject to the following amendments
>
> a) That in the case of the females the age for qualification as a voter should be 21 and not 30.
> b) That every voter shall be able to read and write one of the following languages, English, Sinhalese or Tamil.

The crucial vote on (b) - the literacy - was carried by seventeen to fourteen.[63]

While there may have been a variety of motives behind the agitation for and against the literacy test, carried out by various Members of the Legislative Council, there seems little doubt that the issue of Indian franchise had been central. This was the analysis of the Governor too: he observed that:

> 'the question of the enfranchisement of the Indian labourers may probably have turned the scale in its /literacy qualification/ favour by uniting in one camp some of those who saw in the universal application of a literacy test the only actually attainable means of securing the immediate exclusion of the Indians from the territorial franchise and some of those who saw in it the only actually attainable means of securing their eventual admission.[64]

Whatever the motives, those who favoured the literacy qualification, and thus presided over the rejection of universal franchise offered by the Commissioners, were becoming increasingly nervous indeed. There were long 'explanations'. The Councillor C.W.W. Kannangara summed up the Sinhalese explanation - to 'remove any possible misunderstanding'; the literacy test was said to be chosen as a 'last resort': having failed to achieve a proper 'understanding on the grant of an effective limited franchise to the ever-increasing number of non-domiciled, dumb-driven, recruited labourers and other foreigners' in their midst, they had been 'obliged' to vote for the clause. It was not

that they had loved universal franchise less but that they had feared the 'real and grave menace' more.[65]

The Europeans were more nervous. They had to reckon with criticism, not only in Ceylon but in Britain as well. T.L. Villiers provided their explanation.

> 'We Europeans shifted our ground at the last moment... we planned of no differentiation beyond what the Commissioners had recommended. (But) one could feel that the country really felt strongly against manhood suffrage to non-Ceylonese merely on five years' residence... I think we are justified in sensing the feeling of the people in a matter of this kind...I am inclined to think that our action over the literacy qualification has been interpreted correctly, not as a concession nor as sacrificing the Tamil labourer but as a recognition of the justified fears of the better educated Ceylonese'.[66]

No amount of explanations, however, could have prevented the Indian view of the European's 'betrayal' of the Indian labourer. The fact that the literacy test suited the European well - being literate - would have been a sufficient ground for the Indian accusation. There is reason, however, to believe that there were more compelling reasons for the European move: the thought that the Indian labourer might cease to be docile if they cease to be voteless and the vision of the agitator - not necessarily the Indian variety - destroying the 'peace' of the estate could not have been far from their thoughts.[67]

In any case, in seeking to impose a literacy test upon their own people - and not merely upon the Indians - they placed a powerful weapon in the hands of their political opponents. The pro-literacy test Councillors were roundly condemned as 'reactionaries' by the labour leaders (Ceylonese), who had consistently advocated universal franchise. This action of the Councillors was said to confirm the labour leaders' long-held view that the political caucus had all along been determined to keep the privilege of voting to a narrow clique which they themselves could manipulate.[68]

The problems of Indian franchise were not to end with the resolution on the literacy qualification. Its supporters were taking stock of the many reasons that militated against it. Besides the growing embarrassment they had to face, they were beginning to realize its impact on the vocal Ceylonese urban labour, and, particularly its effects on the educationally backward Kandyans - to save whom the literacy test had been mainly designed in the first place.

In this context, the crucial vote - which was yet to come - on the acceptability of the Donoughmore Scheme as a whole was in the balance.

The Governor came forward with a compromise. In a long, well-argued document the Governor pointed out the incapability of the residential test - as defined in the Donoughmore Report - to give 'general satisfaction' and the impracticability of the literacy test agreed to in the Legislative Council. The Governor had no illusions about the urgency of the problem because,

> 'no one who had experience of the disturbing effects of 'Indian Questions' in certain parts of Africa could contemplate with equanimity the emergence of such a question as a political issue in Ceylon. In the interests of internal harmony,in the interests of the economic development of our natural resources in which Indian labour plays so great a part, in the interests of our future good relations with the Government and people of India, it seems to me of the highest importance that this question should be faced and, if possible, settled before it becomes acute'.

His solution was that subject to special provision for the undomiciled, domicile should be made the standard test. This test, he argued, will entitle practically all the Ceylonese, a quite appreciable number of Indians and a few Europeans to be registered. For the undomiciled, he proposed a choice of either of two alternative qualifications in lieu of that domicile, subject in both cases to the requirement of application to be registered as a condition of registration. The one alternative would be compliance with the franchise conditions of the Manning Constitution of 1924 in respect of literacy and the possession or occupation of property or the enjoyment of an income of prescribed value as specified in Article XXVI(I)(h) of the Order in Council of 1923. This, the Governor observed, would provide for practically all European residents of British nationality and for a number of the British Indians engaged in commerce or in professional work. The other alternative would be the production of a certificate of permanent settlement granted by some duly appointed officer. The conditions for a certificate were a) a requirement to furnish satisfactory evidence of five years' residence and b) to make before the appointed officer

> 'a duly attested declaration to the effect that he or she was permanently settled in the Island or was residing within the Island with the intent to settle therein, and that, while registered as a voter, he or she would

renounce any claim to protection by any Government other than that of Ceylon or to any statutory rights, privileges or exemptions to which residents of all races and communities were not entitled'.

The Governor considered the 'device' of certificates of permanent settlement a method of satisfying the test of an animus manendi; while the requirement of explicit renunciation of any claim to special protection by any Government other than that of Ceylon was necessary to impress upon the applicant that the 'acquisition of equal rights implies the acceptance of equal obligations and liabilities'; and they were claimed to provide a more effective test of abiding interest or permanent settlement than could be based merely on the completion of five years' residence.

These proposals, the Governor believed, were justifiable on grounds of principle as well as of expediency, and to be more likely to provide a permanent solution of the difficulty than any of the alternative proposals which have been put forward. The Governor also had a further urgent reason for the compromise: that if these proposals were made acceptable to a majority of the unofficial Members', the Donoughmore Scheme would be saved.[69]

While the Governor's proposals did, to some extent, help to appease Ceylonese opinion, they served to widen the conflict to involve the Government of India and the Colonial Office in a major row.

The Indian elite in Ceylon launched the attack on the Stanley modifications - as the Governor's proposals were called - as an 'unholy bargain' and a sort of quid pro quo for Sinhalese Councillors' assent to the Donoughmore proposals and a device to 'placate' the Sinhalese.[70] The Indian Legislative Assembly and the Government of India took over from there.

On 11 February 1930 the Indian Legislative Assembly debated on a motion demanding the intervention of the Government of India for the withdrawal of Stanley modifications and the adoption of the original recommendations of the Donoughmore Commission. It turned out to be more an attack on the British Empire and the Colonial Office than a discussion on the Indian franchise issue. 'Our blood boils' began Pandit H.N. Kunzru, 'at the thought of the atmosphere of inequality' in which the Indians abroad had to live; it was time, he warned,

that the Colonial Office realized that there is scarcely any question on which Indian opinion feels as keenly as the status of Indians abroad; how could they forget their brothers in Africa? The Governor's 'South African experience' was said to be behind his importing 'South African notions' to Ceylon.

The speakers in the Assembly were particularly bitter about the requirement of explicit renunciation of the protective roles of Governments other than that of Ceylon, which was said to be a 'novel doctrine' enunciated for the 'first time' by the Government of Ceylon. The 'ugly aspects' of the whole situation in Ceylon had made them wonder, a Councillor declared, whether the 'entity known as the British Empire has any real existence for other people than the whites'.

But most speakers urged retaliatory action. K.C. Roy was the most outspoken: 'knowing as I do the methods of the Colonial Office', he argued, 'I fear that a mere representation couched in milk and honey will not do; we ought to show the big stick'. His case was that Ceylon could and should be brought to its knees:

> 'the future of Ceylon Government, the future of Ceylon is in our hands. They are dependent on us for their labour...If we cut off labour supplies tomorrow, the Ceylon Government cannot go on. The Island of Ceylon is also dependent on us for their food supplies. In any representation that the Government of India may make, this point should be made absolutely clear.'

To the Government spokesman, G.S. Bajpai, who promised that everything possible would be done to reach an understanding, and who declared that the 'door is not closed', a Member warned, 'if the door is not open, we shall force it open'. Mohamed Ali Jinnah concluded the day's proceedings with a harangue on this 'monstrous injustice' perpetrated on Indians abroad.[71]

A variety of interpretations were given to the Indian outburst. At the Colonial Office, however, there was general agreement that 'political conditions in India explain the motion': that it was really 'making a mountain out of a molehill', an exercise in 'propaganda' to discredit the Government of India for its alleged inertia and insensitivity to the Indian and his welfare.[72]

In Ceylon, on the other hand, there were two theories. One was, that this was an expression of the historical tendency of India and Indians to interfere in the internal affairs of the Island; the second theory was, that this was an attempt by the Indian politicians to use Ceylon - a smaller country, nearer and more manageable - as a theatre of conflict to vent their anger on unremedied grievances in Africa and elsewhere and even to make an example of Ceylon for happenings elsewhere.[73]

Surprisingly, hardly anyone seemed to interpret the Indian action as an expression of their deep concern for the labourer in Ceylon. An analysis of the debate does not seem to suggest such a concern either. What it does suggest is that the situation of the Indian in Ceylon seemed less important to the Indian politicians than the use of it as a stick to beat the British and their attitudes.

The Colonial Office tried to reassure itself that the 'big stick' was an 'idle threat', as it would be 'cutting off their nose to spite their face'; and, perhaps, will be 'very unpopular in India' as such a policy cannot be carried out without 'greater and more permanent injury to India than to Ceylon'.[74] But that the Colonial Office was concerned about such a threat, was evident from Lord Passfield's (Secretary of State for the Colonies) request to the Governnor to 'attempt to obtain some estimate of the effect which the implied 'threat' would have on Ceylon.[75] The Governor's 'estimate' on the other hand, could not have been very reassuring to the Colonial Office: 'serious effect on European financial interests', whereas, 'it would affect Ceylonese interests to a small extent only'; few, if any, leading Ceylonese would appreciate the effect on the 'general prosperity of the Island' and it seems unlikely that 'even this appreciation would outweigh their reluctance to advocate surrender to what would be popularly considered as an unwarrantable attempt by the Government of India to dictate to Ceylon'.[76]

The Ceylonese politicians generally dismissed the threat as 'mere bluff'; it was considered 'quite impossible' for the Government of India to stop

emigration as the emigrants would find ways and means of finding their way to Ceylon, anyway; and the prohibition of exports was said to be 'very unlikely' as it would 'interfere' with the enormous profits of Indian merchants 'who were quite powerful in the Indian Legislative Assembly'. There was no doubt, they agreed, that Indians would make themselves 'unpleasant' in various ways to the Imperial Government and to the British planting interests; but then, they inquired, 'why should Ceylon be made to suffer to buy off hostility of this nature?'[77] Their view of any possible concessions to the Indians was unequivocal: a disturbance of the settled Constitution,

> 'to conciliate a stronger people who at the moment happens to be giving trouble to the authorities will make the people of this country feel that there has been a breach of faith and a sacrifice of their interests for ulterior purposes'.[78]

Most Sinhalese nationalists indeed welcomed the execution of the threat: even if these threats can be carried out, they declared,

> 'Ceylon ought to face them once for all. They would undoubtedly cause injury, but on the other hand they would foster local growth of food and indigenous labour and tend to multiply the sources of both food and labour and release Ceylon from the present condition of being at the mercy of one strong country'.[79]

The Sinhalese reaction, thus, had certain nationalistic as well as economic aspects. The Sinhalese elite obviously saw in this strife an opportunity for defiance of a traditional big brother who was thought to be continually interfering in their affairs; the strife was also perhaps seen by them as an answer to their prayer for the discontinuance of Indian labour. Hence their determination to push the Government of Ceylon hard by threats and cajolery to maintain a policy of 'not yielding an inch' to the Indians - secretly hoping, perhaps, that the Indians would carry out their threats. Indeed the Government was not left in any doubt about the possible consequences of yielding to Indian demands. The Workers Federation, for example, under S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, resolved: that in the event of any yielding,

> 'all steps be taken to prevent the successful working of any scheme of Government embodying such modifications'.[80]

What had actually begun as a rescue operation of the Indian labourer - if that was the intention of the Indian politician - had by now turned out to be

a squabble between the Indian and Ceylonese elite. In this new crisis, the Indian labourer and his problems, in fact, seemed very remote from the intentions and calculations of the contending parties.

Any hope of diminution of hostilities was dashed by the entry of the Government of India and the Colonial Office into the area of conflict.

The Government of India, obviously harried by Indian politicians, had decided to act. But by the vigour and virulence with which it joined battle when it did, often overstepping the bounds of diplomacy, it lent its actions to many, perhaps unfair, interpretation. It was said to be either an attempt to divert the attention of its bothersome politicians from political problems in India or that it was trying to curry favour with them by over-doing the 'protective' act of Indians in Ceylon.[81]

In a number of hard-hitting communiques Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, complained that matters had been complicated by the modifications by the Governor and the reasons he had adduced in support of them.[82] He did not, for instance, fear that the Indians were a 'potential menace' to local predominance as they would not receive more than five or six seats in the Legislative Council. In fact, the Viceroy did not think that there was 'anything fundamentally objectionable' in Indians safeguarding their own interests 'by being able to wield influence over majority parties'.

The Viceroy was most troubled by the Governor's references to South Africa: the reference was said to be 'neither felicitous nor apt' and had roused the strongest resentment in India. The references had created the impression that the Governor's thinking was coloured by his South African experience. The Viceroy added,

> 'we submit there is no analogy between certain parts of Africa, with their peculiar socio-economic problems created by the impact of races of fundamentally different civilizations and Ceylon whose history and civilization bear unmistakable impress of Indian influence. Geographical proximity and affinities of culture and race make it impossible that Ceylon and South India should subsist side by side in mutual isolation.'

The Viceroy's major objection was to the Governor's 'explicit renunciation' clause. An assurance privately provided to the India Office by the Under

Secretary of State for Colonies, Dr. D. Shiels - that: a) the declaration of domicile was merely a 'declaration of intention and could be signed quite honestly by many who make periodic visits to India; and b) the declaration of relinquishment of the Government of India's protection and special privileges was only 'of academic importance' - was severely criticised by the Viceroy.[83] In his opinion, the proposed declaration of domicile would not be possible for those who intended to visit India regularly 'without perjuring themselves'; and renunciation of claim to special statutory rights and privileges was not said to be possible without forfeiting privileges that India had gained for its nationals in Ceylon, like the privileges admissible under the Standard Wage Ordinance; hence it was 'far from being academic'.

Besides the, by then familiar, threats which had been aired in the Indian Legislative Assembly, the Viceroy offered a new one: he offered to continue his 'protective role' of Indians in Ceylon until he saw fit to relinquish it. He warned,

> 'renunciation of our protection, if it were general, would not distress us if we were sure new arrangements would provide effective substitute for our solicitude. Of this there does not seem to be much prospect at present. Until the Indian labourer in Ceylon can use his vote effectively to influence policy, continuance of our protective role will be necessary and will be insisted upon by unofficial opinion in India'.

Lord Irwin added a final word of advice to the Colonial Office and the Government of Ceylon:

> 'the true criterion' he advised 'for determining their eligibility for franchise is their life-long service to Ceylon, not duration of their stay there...If real aim of Ceylon Government is to make Indians in Ceylon look solely to them as protectors, enlargement of Indian electorate is more likely to achieve this end than restriction of it'.

The Colonial Office was of two minds about its line of approach to the Indian intervention. The permanent officials led by H.R. Cowell - head of Ceylon Department - advocated a collision course with the Government of India for what they termed this intolerable 'interference in the internal affairs of Ceylon'. Lord Passfield, the Secretary of State, and his Under Secretary, Dr. Drummond Shiels, settled for a more cautious approach - of compromise on a few details.

Cowell was very outspoken. He found the Viceroy's communiques 'full of contradictions and inconsistencies, to say nothing of the unfairness of the arguments'. He found an explanation for the militancy: 'I should have guessed that it was drafted by an Indian and with a view to publication'.[84] Cowell's advice to the Secretary of State was unequivocal: that the Colonial Office should 'not admit that the Government of India has any special claim to be the final arbiter on questions affecting the internal administration of Ceylon'.[85]

The real cause of the permanent officials' annoyance was not hard to find. The methods and the efficiency of the Office had been questioned: the Viceroy had made a reference to 'leaving them in the dark' and an omission by the Colonial Office 'to give an opportunity to make representations' about the 'anti-Indian character' of the Governor's proposals. Cowell, who drafted the reply and signed it - Passfield endorsed it - reported that,

> 'whilst it is for the Secretary of State for Colonies to consider such questions as the effect in Ceylon of the grant of unrestricted franchise to Indian labourers in the Island, it is, of course, no part of his duty to communicate with the Government of India'.

Cowell was also quick to point out that the Viceroy's contention was a 'surprise to Lord Passfield himself' as the 'whole document was with the Secretary of State for India for some time before it was sent'.[86]

It so happened that it was in the heat of this controversy that the Colonial Office came to be fully committed to the Ceylonese way of thinking on the Indian question. After some biting remarks about misrepresenting the Governor's remarks on Africa, the Viceroy was told that it was the 'duty of the Governor to draw attention to Ceylonese opinion of large numbers of persons who have no permanent association with Ceylon'; the Viceroy was also reminded that it was,

> 'not unnatural that the Ceylonese should press strongly for the imposition of reasonable restrictions on the enfranchisement of persons not native to, nor domiciled in the Island'.[87]

J.H. Emmens, of the Ceylon Department of the Colonial Office, was to observe that there was nothing 'unreasonable' about the Governor's requirements for

the Indians as they had been based on the Naturalization Ordinance of 1890; indeed, such requirements were the normal practice in many countries.[88]

Passfield, however, was in a mood of compromise. The embarrassing position of his colleague in the Cabinet - Secretary of State for India, Wedgwood Benn - could not have been far from Passfield's thoughts. He contemplated the abandonment of the 'Renunciation Clause', because, he argued, 'formal renunciation of protection would not prevent the Government of India from intervening' anyway.[89] Even Shiels was conciliatory: he observed that 'Imperial considerations may compel us to give something' and 'it would be wise to give way on this [renunciation clause] as there is nothing substantial in it'.[90]

But amidst this mood of compromise, it was the Governor's turn to be embarrassed. The Governor considered that the proposals 'as a whole' had been the 'decisive factor' in securing a majority of non-official Members for the acceptance of the Donoughmore Scheme; any substantial modification, he warned, would be regarded as a 'breach of faith' and would be the

> 'more strongly resented as those Sinhalese Members who voted for acceptance would be exposed to taunt that they had walked into a cunningly baited trap'.[91]

But by then the pressures on the Colonial Office, for some compromise, were increasing. Even the British Labour Party's Advisory Committee on Imperial Questions - apparently under Indian pressure - was urging a compromise on the renunciation question: because it was felt that,

> 'even if the immigrants were under this compulsion to surrender their claims to protection from the Government of India, that Government would never be permitted by the Indian Legislature, which is very jealous of the welfare and the status of Indians abroad, to disavow its responsibility to the Indian public in regard to Indian workers in Ceylon.'[92]

At a meeting held at the India Office attended by Wedgwood Benn, Dr. Shiels, Sir Herbert Stanley (who was on holiday in England), Sir L. Kershaw (of India Office) and H.R. Cowell, a compromise was arrived at: the omission from the conditions of eligibility for the franchise of the requirement that the holder of a certificate for permanent settlement must renounce his claim to special

protection by any Government other than that of Ceylon. The Governor agreed on condition that the Government of India assured him that the concession would satisfy them. The compromise had been facilitated by the agreement by two leading Sinhalese politicians - A.C.G. Wijekoon and W.A. de Silva - to the abandonment of the clause.[93]

Cowell's plan, for introducing the modification without hurting Sinhalese feelings and without seeming to yield to Indian pressure, was revealing; he minuted:

> 'I do not think there would be any legitimate protest if the Order in Council were issued with provisions as to the Indian franchise based on the wording of the Secretary of State's Despatch as it stands (after change) without any reference to renouncement by voters of the protection by the Indian Government. This should not be announced as a concession to pressure from Government of India, but in any correspondence with that [Indian] Government, we could point to the fact that the provision to which they appeared to take special exception had been deleted'.[94]

The Colonial Office went out of its way to explain to the Governor how he should set about handling the compromise with opponents of Indian franchise in Ceylon. The requirement, the Governor was told, would 'serve no practical purpose' since 'in fact no Indian with the necessary five years' residence in Ceylon would be entitled to claim the special protection in question'. While deleting the clause, they had succeeded in substituting, so it was claimed, a clause which was 'equivalent in effect'.

This was, of course, arguable. The old version of the relevant section in the draft Order in Council read:

> 'and who makes and subscribes before such an officer a declaration in the Form B... stating that he is permanently settled in Ceylon or is residing in the Island with the intent to settle therein and that he renounces any claim during such time as he may be registered as a voter to special protection by any Government other than that of Ceylon or to any special rights, privileges or exemptions under any Ordinance of Ceylon to which residents in Ceylon of all races and communities are not entitled'.

The new version of the relevant section read:

> 'provided that during such time as any holder of a certificate of permanent settlement may be registered as a voter he shall not be entitled to claim any privileges or exemptions which, under the law of Ceylon are not common to all British subjects resident in Ceylon'.

The Colonial Office went further to meet the demands of the Government of

India in promising not to repeal or amend, to the detriment of Indians, any of the laws of Ceylon affecting their position or privileges; in order to confirm this promise, India was assured that any Bill diminishing or abrogating any of the existing conditions or privileges of Indian immigrants would fall within the category of those to which the Governor could not assent without the prior permission of the Secretary of State.[95]

The Colonial Office maintained that the Indian protests amounted in effect to claim a position of privilege rather than of equality; it had compromised merely to 'remove any avoidable cause of misunderstanding'.[96]

The Colonial Office officialdom did not like it a bit. Commented one bitterly: 'now that the Government of India and the Indian politicians have had an opportunity of blowing off steam' they could hope to hear no more of this agitation; and, in any event, India could attend 'to much more urgent matters' she had in hand.[97]

But such hopes were not to be realized. India was to 'interfere' again and again - particularly, in the matter of wages of Indian labourers.[98]

But perhaps the most pungent commentary on India's role in the affairs of the labourer had come from a journal that was dedicated to the Indian labourer's welfare - The Ceylon Indian. Commenting on the fact that almost 50 per cent of the Indian labourers in Ceylon were Panchamas - the 'depressed classes',[99] the journal commented:

> 'We have always held the view that it is not economic distress alone that drives such a large volume of labour to this Island, but it is rather the social oppression that even now prevails in South India. It is high time that our patriots in the mainland took up this question in all earnestness and brought to this large class of people those amenities of life which would make it possible for them to look to India with that affection and regard which is so essential for the even strength of the Indian population'.[100]

When voters were registered for the elections of 1931 - based on the Donoughmore Constitution - 21 per cent of the Indian adult population received the franchise as against 60 per cent of the rest of the adult population in Ceylon. The Governor observed that the number of Indians registered would have been higher had not Indian labourers on some estates been 'intimidated'

against applying for registration by the circulation of some misleading pamphlets 'some of which were traceable to Indian sources'. The pamphlets had warned that the certificate of permanent settlement was a device to remove their privileges. In fact the large majority of Indians registered claimed the qualification of domicile and did not apply for a certificate of permanent settlement. The few who did apply for such certificates were mostly residents of Colombo and therefore 'had no privileges to lose'.

The number of Indians registered - 100,574 - represented an increase of 708 per cent on the number of Indians registered in the Indian communal electorates in 1924. This increase compared not unfavourably with the increase of 770 per cent in the total number of voters.[101]

Amidst all this conflict raging around them, the uncertainty of the status of the Indian immigrant had not changed. Even after the Indian storm over his political rights and the subsequent compromise, the essential dilemma remained unresolved - that he was the unwanted outsider. The Indian intervention had, perhaps, heightened his isolation. An Indian leader in Ceylon had voiced the Indian's dilemma:

> 'while he is in the unhappy position of being looked upon as an exploiter by the Sinhalese by reason of his competing with the local labourer, he is in fact the exploited in so far as his toil only goes to swell the profits of the planters while he sweats himself but for a pittance. On the one hand the Ceylonese people would restrict the influx of Indian labourers into this country, while the European planters would make every effort to induce them to come in large numbers, so long as they merely submit to their terms and help in keeping down wages. But this is only a passing phase. We know that a day will come, soon or late, when the Indian labourer will not be wanted either by the Ceylonese or European planters'.[102]

On the other hand, the Indian intervention - even if it had to be - had only made the Ceylonese elite the more bitter; they seemed determined to 'deal' with the Indian at the first opportunity. In fact, a leading Sinhalese politician had already warned that they would bide their time 'at least until such time as we can by legislation' deal with the Indian 'menace'.[103]

The opportunity was to arrive in 1948 - the very first year of Independence. By the Citizenship Act of 1948 and the Indian and Pakistani (Citizenship)

Act of 1949, a large segment of the Indian population was to be disfranchised - leaving almost a million 'stateless' Indians whom neither Ceylon nor India wanted.

There seems to be little doubt that the tragic situation of the Indian immigrant in Ceylon had been the result of a painful lack of comprehension of the human problems involved by the chief actors who presided over their destinies - the British Government, the Indian Government and, mainly, the Ceylonese politicians. The Indian's story became one of the saddest chapters to the recent history of Ceylon.

NOTES

1. P. Sundaram to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VII.
2. Proceedings of the C.L.C. (Ceylon Legislative Council), 19 November 1926; C.I. 20 November 1926.
3. The Report of the Agent of the Government of India in Ceylon for the Year 1928 (hereafter referred to in the notes as the Indian Agent's Report, p.15.
4. T. Reid of the Ceylon Civil Service held this office from 1925 to 1928.
5. At the beginning of 1928 the following were the members of the Board of Indian Immigrant Labour: T.Reid (the Controller and the Chairman of the Board); W.W. Woods (the Colonial Treasurer); W.E. Wait (Chairman of the Board of Immigration and Quarantine); Dr. J.F.E. Bridger (the Director of Medical and Sanitary Services); H.D. Garrick (non-official Member of the L.C.); I.X. Pereira (Senior Indian Member of the L.C.); J.J. Wall (Ceylon Chamber of Commerce); George Brown (the Planters' Association of Ceylon); H.L. de Mel (the Low-country Products Association); T.L. Villiers (Ceylon Estates Proprietary Association); and W. Coombe (Ceylon Estates Proprietary Association).
6. The Report of the Controller of Indian Immigrant Labour for 1928 (hereafter referred to in the notes as The Controller's Report for 1928.p.15.
7. The Controller's Report for 1928, p.12.
8. The Controller's Report for 1928, p.16.
9. The Indian Agent's Report for 1928, pp.16-17.
10. The Indian Agent's Report for 1928, p.10.
11. The Controller's Report for 1928, p.15.
12. The Administrative Report of the Director of Education for 1928, cited in the Indian Agent's Report for 1928, p.12.
13. Ibid.
14. The Indian Agent's Report for 1928, p.22.
15. Ibid., pp.17-18.
16. Ibid., pp.17-18.
17. Satia Vagiswara Aiyer, in the Ceylon Indian, 15 January 1928.
18. W.A. de Silva, in S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike (Ed.) The Handbook of the Ceylon National Congress, 1919-1928, p. 907.
19. Cited in St. Nihal Singh, "The Indians that Ceylon Wants", The Modern Review, May 1929, pp.549-552.
20. Ibid.
21. D.G. Money (Secretary, the Indian League) to D. Commission,D.C.W.S.,Vol.IV.
22. The Ceylon Workers' Federation to the D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.V; and P.P. Givendrasinghe to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.III.
23. The Controller's Report for 1929, p.10.
24. Dr. I. David, evidence before D. Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.II, p.269.

25. See below Chapter V: The Europeans.
26. The Rights and Claims of the Kandyan People, a pamphlet published by the Kandyan National Assembly to be presented to the D. Commission, pp.22-23.
27. P. Givendrasinghe, Vice-President, Ceylon National Association to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.III.
28. Proceedings of C.L.C., 25 February 1927 (D.S. Senanayake), 24 February 1927 (D.B. Jayatilaka).
29. The labour recruited in South India for Ceylon estates has never been indentured. About half the immigrants, however, that is the estate labourers, were assisted through the Immigration Fund collected from estates employing Indian labour; the other immigrants came to Ceylon unassisted to seek employment mainly in the municipal services. The figures of unassisted labour were as follows: 88,787 in 1924; 101,324 in 1925; 114,421 in 1926; 125,739 in 1927; and 138,157 in 1928. The Controller admitted that almost all these labourers found employment, and that no restrictions were placed on their coming to Ceylon to find employment, see The Controller's Report for 1928, p.8.
30. Albert Godamune, a leading member of the Kandyan National Assembly, referred to the loyalties of the Indian population during a public meeting, 16 February 1929, the report of proceedings of this meeting is found in C.O.54,894.
31. K. Natesa Aiyer to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.I.
32. St. Nihal Singh, "Anti-Indian Moves in Ceylon", The Modern Review, December 1928, pp.621-630.
33. The Controller's Report, Table B3, p.23.
34. The Indian commercial community, based mainly in Colombo and other leading towns, had the virtual monopoly of the wholesale import of dry-fish, curry-stuffs and Indian textiles; this group wielded great economic power in the commercial world of Ceylon.
35. Dr. I. David, evidence before D. Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.II, p.267.
36. The Indian Agent's Report for 1928, p.17.
37. D.C.R., pp.96-97.
38. St. Nihal Singh, "The Indian Crisis in Ceylon", The Modern Review, May 1930, pp.605-611.
39. Sir Matthew Nathan to Ernest ?, 8 October 1928, Nathan Papers.
40. W.A. de Silva, Presidential address, public meeting to protest at the extension of franchise to non-Ceylonese, 16 February 1929; a report on this meeting is in C.O.54,894.
41. A. Godamune, ibid.
42. Martinus C. Perera, ibid.
43. The Indians' visit to India was believed to be to carry their earnings to their kith and kin. Large sums of money, so the Sinhalese believed, were said to be annually drained out of the country. Although this might have been true of the Indian commercial community, it was certainly an exaggerated view of the case of the labourer. There were no reliable figures of amounts so remitted annually. But the Indians (labourers) were provided all the facilities to do so. They were able to remit money to India through their employers and the Planters' Agency in India and through the Post Office. The amount remitted by the labourers through the Post Office - the figures were available - did not seem to amount to much: in 1925 - Rupees (Rs) 2,793,094; in 1926 - Rs.3,094,464; in 1927 - Rs.3,347,039; in 1928 - Rs.3,432,392; the figures cited in the Controller's Report for 1928, pp.21-22.
44. Table I. Number of Indian Estate Labourers who arrived in Ceylon from India.

1926	-	101,746
1927	-	159,398
1928	-	133,712

Table II. Number of Labourers that returned to India from Ceylon

1926	-	61,265
1927	-	87,481
1928	-	93,596

Table III: Net Flow of Immigration or excess of arrivals over departures

1926	-	40,481
1927	-	71,917
1928	-	40,116

(Source: The Indian Agent's Report for 1928, pp.3-4).

45. T. Reid, evidence before the D. Commission, D.C.O.S.,Vol.IV,pp.153 ff.; see also The Controller's Report for 1928, p.10.
46. D.C.R., p.96.
47. H.R. Cowell, minute regarding his meeting with D.B. Jayatilaka, 26 September 1928, C.O.54,992.
48. A.F. Molamure, evidence in camera before D. Commission, Nathan Papers
49. Herbert Stanley (Governor) to Secretary of State, 2 June 1929, Cmd.3419.
50. H.R. Cowell, minute, 2 November 1928, C.O.54,892.
51. Clifford to Secretary of State, 20 November 1926, C.O.537,692.
52. St. Nihal Singh, "Moves to make Indians in Ceylon Political Helots", The Modern Review, June 1929, pp.657-667.
53. H.R. Cowell, minute, 24 May 1930, C.O.54,900.
54. Lord Irwin to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 21 February 1930, C.O.54,899.
55. K. Natesa Aiyer to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.I; also his evidence before the D. Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.II, p.251 ff.
56. C.E. Bulathsinhala at meeting of the Ceylon National Congress to discuss the Donoughmore Report, The Ceylon Daily News, (C.D.N.), 3 September 1928.
57. W.A. de Silva, Presidential address, public meeting, 16 February 1929, CO.54,894.
58. St. Nihal Singh, "Anti-Indian Moves in Ceylon", The Modern Review, December 1928, pp.621-630.
59. St. Nihal Singh, "Moves to make Indians in Ceylon Political Helots", The Modern Review, June 1929, pp.657-667.
60. Proceedings of C.L.C., 15 November 1928.
61. Although the Europeans were not regarded as Ceylonese, apprehensions based on numbers and concentration in various areas did not arise in their case.
62. T.L. Villiers to Dr. D. Shiels (Under Secretary of State for Colonies), 16 November 1928, C.O.54,892.
63. Proceedings of C.L.C., 15 November 1928.
64. Herbert Stanley to Secretary of State, 2 June 1929, Cmd.3419.
65. C.W.W. Kannangara to Governor, 18 November 1928, C.O.54,892.
66. T.L. Villiers to Dr. D. Shiels, 16 November 1928, C.O54,892.
67. H.R. Cowell, minute, 2 November 1928, C.O.54,892; The Times (London), leading article: 'The Ceylon Experiment', 30 October 1929.
68. A.E. Goonesinghe, Public Meeting, Times of Ceylon, 16 November 1928,Memorandum of Ceylon Trade Union Congress to Secretary of State,20 November 1928,C.O.54,892.
69. Herbert Stanley to Secretary of State, 2 June 1929, Cmd.3419.
70. St. Nihal Singh, 'The Indian Issue', The Modern Review, December 1929, pp.650-658; 'The Indian Crisis in Ceylon', The Modern Review, May 1930, pp.605-611.
71. Proceedings of Indian Legislative Assembly (Report) 11 February, 1930, C.O.54,899.
72. Dr. D. Shiels, minute, 18 February 1930, C.O.54,899; J.H. Emmens, minute, 12 March 1930,C.O.54,899; H.R. Cowell, minute, 18 March 1930, C.O.54,899.
73. Memorandum of Lanka Mahajana Sabha to Governor, 12 March 1930,C.O.54,899.
74. The Colonial Office estimated that India could not take economic measures as far as the trade balance was concerned. Ceylon's domestic exports to India amounted to Rs.15,000,000, as against imports from India of Rs.80,000,000; an official commented 'it is open to question whether the Government of India could, except with great difficulty, entirely prevent the migration of labour, and any attempt to do so would probably result in evasions and abuses; hence, the threat appears to be a double-edged weapon'. H.R.Cowell to Governor,30 January 1930,C.O.54,899;also C.O.54,926.

75. Passfield to Stanley, 27 March 1930, CO.54,899.
76. Stanley to Passfield, 15 April 1930, C.O.54,899.
77. A.C.G. Wijeyekoon's visit to the Colonial Office (report), 17 March 1930, C.O.54,899.
78. Lanka Mahajana Sabha to Governor, 12 March 1930, C.O.54,899.
79. Ibid.
80. Report of Public Meeting, C.D.N., 2 April 1930; also C.O.54,899
81. Dr. D. Shiels, minute, 18 February 1930, C.O.54,899; Lanka Mahajana Sabha to Governor, 12 March 1930, C.O.54,899.
82. Viceroy to Secretary of State for India, 29 November 1929, C.O.54,894. Viceroy to Secretary of State for India, 20 January 1930, C.O.54,899. Viceroy to Secretary of State for Colonies, 21 February 1930,C.O.54,899.
83. Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, 11 December 1929, C.O.54,894. Viceroy to Secretary of State for India, 20 January 1930, C.O.54,899.
84. H.R.Cowell, minute, 10 March 1930, C.O.54,899.
85. H.R.Cowell, minute, 7 March 1930, C.O.54,899.
86. Reply of Colonial Office to Secretary of State for India (signed: Cowell), 26 March 1930, C.O.54,899.
87. Ibid.
88. J.H. Emmens, minute, 13 December 1929, CO.54,894.
89. Passfield to Stanley, 5 March 1930, C.O.54,899.
90. Dr. D. Shiels, minute, 22 March 1930, C.O.54,899.
91. Stanley to Passfield, 10 March 1930, C.O.54,899.
92. Labour Party Advisory Committee on Imperial Questions (sec. S.L. Polak) to Secretary of State for Colonies, 1 March 1930, C.O.54,899.
93. The Meeting was held on the 16 May 1930, C.O.54,899.
94. H.R. Cowell, minute, C.O.54,899, 26 April 1930.
95. Secretary of State to Governor, 10 June 1930, C.O.54,899.
96. Ibid.
97. J.H. Emmens, minute, 18 May 1930, C.O.54,899.
98. Joint Secretary, Government of India to Chief Secretary, Ceylon. 13 November 1931, C.O.54,911.
99. Reliable statistics of the caste composition of the immigrant estate labourers was obtained by the Controller of Indian Immigrant Labour. The Controller's Report for 1928, p.11 and p.23, Table B3.
100. The Ceylon Indian, 8 January, 1928.
101. Governor to Secretary of State, 10 June 1931, C.O.54,900.
102. K. Natesa Aiyer to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.I.
103. C.W.W. Kannangara to Governor, 18 November 1928, C.O.54,892.

CHAPTER IV: THE SMALL MINORITIES:

a) THE MUSLIMS - MOORS AND MALAYS, AND b) THE BURGHERS

a) THE MUSLIMS - MOORS AND MALAYS

In British times, the various Islamic groups of adherents of the Mohammedan faith in Ceylon came to be regarded politically as one community - the Muslims. Such a political unity was an outcome of British Colonial policy with respect to political representation of communities. In its search for viable communities to implement its policy of communal representation, the Administration found in Islam a convenient category to bring together the small minority communities of Ceylon Moors, the Malays, the Afghans and the Borahs.[1] The Government had, thus, until the reforms of 1920, nominated representatives to represent the Muslim community as a whole. And even in the reforms of 1920 and 1924, religion was preserved as the basis of the Mohammedan Electorate, which was to elect the Muslim communal representative to the Legislative Council.

One fact that emerges from a study of the Muslims in Ceylon was their belated entry into the mainstream of powerful Islamic movements elsewhere in the world. Even up to the period under discussion, Ceylonese Islam seemed to have been virtually untouched by such movements. Indian Islam, for instance, had witnessed the Wahhabi protest about accretions and declensions from "pure Islam", with the desired return to the pristine simplicity of Islam; and in India, too, as elsewhere, there was a clear movement towards Islamic modernism- towards a more liberal Islam based on reconciliation with and adaptation to modern conditions.[2] Although occasional expressions of such views were not uncommon among the Ceylonese Muslim elite, there did not seem to be any recognizable movements in those directions.

Some reasons could be adduced for their virtual inactivity. The isolation of Ceylonese Islam from world Islam - owing mainly to its geographical isolation - no doubt, was one reason. And the fact that the Muslims were a tiny minority (about four per cent of the total population) and largely scattered

throughout the Island, was another. But the main reason seems to lie within the very nature of the Muslim community in Ceylon. The community was not homogeneous by any means. It was deeply divided along ethnic, social and even religious lines.

Ethnically, the major group of Ceylon Moors were of Arabic stock while the Malays were of Javanese background. There was also a great deal of social variation: the Moors of the Eastern Province - more than a third of the whole living mainly in homogeneous Muslim villages - were peasants and cultivators with a deeply conservative outlook on life; and the Moors elsewhere were mainly traders living in ~~a~~ Sinhalese areas. This latter group, not unpredictably, were the more progressive among the Moors. The Malays, on the other hand, differed from the Moors in customs and way of life. There were even doctrinal differences: while the Moors were said to be the more orthodox, the Malays prided themselves as being the more 'liberal' group. The Administration's policy of lumping the groups together in one communal electorate had not helped to narrow down the divisions. If at all, as events were to demonstrate, the divisions had only grown wider and deeper. By the period under study, the heterogeneity of the community had degenerated into veritable antagonisms within the various groups of Muslims. In the context of this infighting and their preoccupation with their own local problems, the larger religio-social problems had so been lost sight of as to retard the growth of the Muslim community as a whole.

The middle twenties, however, saw increasing Muslim awareness of their problems. And in this realisation were all the signs of the beginnings of a Muslim awakening. An increasing number of Muslim organisations and Muslim elites were searching for causes for their failures and remedies for the future. They discovered two basic reasons: one was said to be the lack of Muslim unity; and the other was what was described as the failure of Muslim leadership to guide Muslim social evolution.[3] M.T. Akbar, the distinguished Malay leader - he was Solicitor General - who analyzed the problem of Muslim unity, no doubt voiced the general Muslim opinion when he attributed it to the

'lack of wider outlook' and the each-man-for-himself attitude of most Muslims.[4] The events of the period under study revealed that the leaders themselves had realised the extent of the problem and were determined to overcome it. The inauguration, in 1926, of the Young Muslim League and the Muslim Social Union - under the leadership of T.B.Jayah (a Malay) and N.H.M. Abdul Cader (a Moor), two of the three Muslim communal representatives in the Legislative Council - was no doubt the leadership's response to these criticisms. Both these associations had a similar aim: 'for promoting a bond of fellowship among the members of the Muslim community, to foster natural ties which exist between one Muslim and another and to make each one conscious of his duty to his fellow Muslim'.[5] That actually the Muslim leadership was not very successful in its efforts at unity, and that the political developments of the period - mainly the arrival of the Donoughmore Commission - only tended to widen the divisions within the Muslim camp, will be discussed at length later in this study of the Muslims.

The second factor which was said to explain Muslim 'backwardness', the failure of leadership to guide Muslim 'social evolution', was explained by Muslim thinkers as the leadership's failure to tackle chiefly the problem of the education of Muslims. Whether it was due to the failure of Muslim leadership or not, it was true that the Muslims were educationally backward. The figures on literacy - the mere ability to read and write - revealed that the Muslims were only a little above the least literate groups, the Indian immigrants. While the Sinhalese males, for instance, were about 50 per cent literate, the Muslim male was only about 37 per cent literate; and while the Sinhalese female was about 20 per cent literate, the Muslim female was only about 4 per cent literate.[6]

It was generally assumed, not least by the Muslims themselves, that the Muslims revealed a marked lack of enthusiasm for secular education. On closer examination, however, the generalisation did not seem to be as accurate a view of the twentieth century muslim behaviour as it was perhaps of that of the nineteenth. In the early days of the mainly Missionary-managed school

system, fears of proselytism and their natural conservatism seemed to have deterred the Muslims from Western-oriented secular education.[7] If one were to judge by twentieth century trends, such Muslim fears had long been overcome. There was, of course, no doubt that Muslim prejudices about secular education for females remained, as was evident from statistics already adduced. But educational patterns of males had changed. And as regards Muslim males it seems fairer to say that with the exception perhaps, of the deeply conservative Eastern Province there was a great desire for education on secular lines.[8] Indeed, during the period under study, demands for greater facilities for education was one of the main preoccupations of the Muslim leadership.[9]

In any case, it was true that Muslims had not availed themselves of the existing facilities of education - both state and Missionary - as much as groups like the Sinhalese, the Tamils and the Burghers. They were, thus, unable to keep abreast of others in the field of education. The Muslim leadership of the period, however, was deeply alive to the problem and was in fact doing a great deal to remedy the situation. The efforts of the Moslem Educational Society (1918) and the work of the Burdah Union (1925) demonstrated the bestirrings of the community in the cause of Muslim education. The founding of the Zahira College, in Colombo, on the other hand, revealed the fruits of the Muslim revival: the institution was founded to 'combine benefits of modern education with the inspiring aid of Islamic studies.[10]

The internal problems of the community were not the only factors that contributed to the retardation of the social and political growth of the Muslim community; there were the unfortunate events of 1915. The disturbances of that year - now known as the Riots of 1915 - were directed against the Muslims. They had their beginnings in a faction-fight at Gampola over Muslim opposition to a Buddhist religious procession in the vicinity of a Muslim mosque. There is general agreement that the reasons for the spread of the riot were mainly economic: that, in the words of Governor Clifford, the 'improvident villagers were deeply in debt to Moor shopkeepers and had found them merciless creditors;' and when the trouble eruped in Gampola, the opportunity to pay off old

scores and escape from the burdens of debt had presented itself'.[11]

The Administration used harsh, and perhaps unnecessary measures to crush the riot. The Government's attitude was generally attributed to a 'loss of head' over what it misinterpreted to be an anti-Government and anti-European uprising.[12] But the Administration's sympathy with the plight of Muslims with whom historically, it had enjoyed cordial relations could not be mistaken in the actual handling of the events.[13] If loyalty to a friendly minority was the British motive for the extraordinary harshness to the Sinhalese, it was not to be specially appreciated by the Muslims themselves, at least a few years after the events. In the aftermath of the riots, in their own alienation from the majority Sinhalese, theirs was almost a sense of bitterness about British over-reaction. M.T. Akbar was to assess later that,

> 'the English Government backed them (Muslims) too strongly and it threw the other groups into one solid mass'.[14]

It was apparent that even a decade after the events, the bitterness had not been entirely wiped out. Clifford assessed the situation in 1926: he observed that

> 'there can, I fear, be no doubt that the racial antagonism which was at that time engendered between the Sinhalese and the Moors still lingers, especially among the more ignorant sections of the former. Outwardly peace has been completely restored, but I am informed, on what I believe to be reliable authority, that rich Moors are not infreqnently insulted when they visit outlying parts of the country, and that many of their leaders are apprehensive concerning the general attitude of the Sinhalese villagers towards them. They look to the Government for protection but, at the same time, are anxious to conciliate Sinhalese opinion.'[15]

This assessment was largely true and it was corroborated by many a Muslim memorandum to the Donoughmore Commission, which often described their relationship with the Sinhalese as 'strained'.[16] But Clifford's pessimism had obviously blinded him to the determined efforts at rapprochement by the Sinhalese and Muslim leadership. Indeed, the majority leadership's preparedness to accommodate - and often their going out of their way to do so - Muslim needs and aspirations in the Legislative Council and elsewhere was clearly evident. And it was true that with the leadership's goodwill the relationship had improved and was improving all the while.

On the whole, however, the Riot produced disastrous effects on the Muslim community. One significant effect was the loss of their liveliness as a community in Ceylon. Compelled to live in predominantly Sinhalese areas because of their trade, and apprehensive, perhaps, of Sinhalese feelings, they were increasingly withdrawn from active public life. The change was significant. Traditionally, Ceylonese Islam had not been untrue to the nature of Islam elsewhere - not being content to be moulded by its surroundings but actively moulding and transforming the society around it.[17] There were, in fact, those who discovered in this 'intransigent' Muslim quality a reason for the outbreak of the Riots of 1915.[18] An effect of the Riots was to force the Muslims into a cocoon mentality or to what some of the leaders described as a political and social 'stupor'.[19]

But the revival in the middle twenties introduced also a certain Muslim self-consciousness with respect to other Ceybnese communities. There was, for instance, a reaction against the facile argument based on Muslim 'backwardness' - often used by Muslim leaders to impress the Administration to grant more benefits to the Muslims.[20] The argument was seen as defeatist and self-pitying. There was a rallying call to optimism and enthusiasm about the future based on the essential optimism of Islam.[21] This new mood of optimism, though not embodied in a clear movement, was significant indeed. It reflected the emergence of the Muslim community from an overplayed sense of dependence on the sympathy of the Administration to a realization of a need for reliance on their own resources.

In the early Manning years, before the Reforms of 1924, the Muslim elites joined the other ethnic minority elites - Tamils, Indians, Burghers and Europeans - against the Sinhalese political elites in a joint demand for communal representation. Indeed, the Muslim argument became central to the whole case for communal representation: that the Muslims had a 'unique' way of life with which others were'not conversant' and the presence of their own representatives was necessary to represent their needs; and that the Muslims, scattered as they were among Sinhalese villages, needed their own voices to represent matters before unfortunate events such as those of 1915 could take place.

In keeping with his policy of balance of power, Manning, in 1924, provided three Muslim communal seats in the Legislative Council. All the Ceylonese Muslims - Moors and Malays - were thus brought together under this arrangement. And the election of that year brought in two wealthy Moors - N.H.M. Abdul Cader and H.M. Macan Markar - and a Malay educationist, T.B. Jayah.

Theoretically, the political unity achieved under the Muslim communal electorate would have been the ideal setting for the larger Muslim social development; and for the narrowing of divisions within the Muslim camp. For, here in this electorate Islamic religion, and this alone, was the criterion of membership; and race - Moor or Malay - was disregarded for the purposes of the electorate. In fact, the election of two Moors and a Malay by this united Muslim electorate could have been viewed as a hopeful sign for the future of Muslim unity. But surprisingly, it was under these conditions and during this period that Muslim unity was to suffer the greatest setback; three powerful secessionist groups emerged from within the Muslim fold - the Malays, the agriculturalist Moors of the Eastern Province and the 'right wing' Moors. At the beginning of our period, in 1926, theirs was as yet a separatist mood, a dark cloud over Muslim unity. It was only in 1927, with the impending visit of the Donoughmore Commission, and during its actual sessions, that the storm was to break.

It is necessary here to enquire into the nature of these three secessionist groups and the reasons for the development of their separatist tendencies; and, later, we shall enquire as to why these tendencies broke into the open with the advent of the Commission.

First, the question of the Malays. As observed earlier, they constituted a separate ethnic (of Javanese descent) minority group (14,723 in 1926) within the larger Ceylon-Moor-dominated (of Arabic descent and 262,621 in 1926) Muslim community. Here, in this minority situation within a larger political group with which they had to be united willy-nilly because of their religion, we could discover the setting for separatism. But analysing Malay agitation, during this period, in the Press and on platform and in numerous memoranda presented to the Commission, we could discover a wide spectrum of tensions

that led to a cry for separatism. These tensions were mainly racial, religious, economic and political.

As they were a separate race, with their own customs and way of life,[22] among the Moors, tensions were to be expected. Indeed, in the context of Manning's plan of ethnic communal representation, where Tamils, Indians, Europeans and Burghers were represented on ethnic lines, Malays could justifiably ask why ethnic representation was not suited for them; and why they had to be made into a 'mixed pickle' with the Moors,[23]. Though, as explained earlier,[24] the representation of a tiny group like the Malays would not have suited Manning's plan of 'balance of power', Manning certainly opened the door for such demands by his scheme.

Even religion became a source of tension between the Moors and the Malays. Doctrinally, the Malays argued, 'interpretations given by the Malays are very liberal and in consonance with the trend of modern thought and modern civilisation', while the Moors, they asserted, 'still adhere to those ancient religious customs that found favour with the people more than 1300 years ago'.[25] Their 'liberal' views were claimed to make them look at life differently. Their association, or what they termed their 'unfair coupling', with the Moors was argued to be a 'retarding influence' on their development; because, for instance,the women in the Malay States have been relatively emancipated, whereas here in Ceylon Malay women's progress has been retarded as they had to follow their 'backward' Moor sisters.[26]

Their religious differences were said to go deeper. The Malays argued that they were even institutionally different from the Moors. They had separate mosques and Malay priests to look after them.[27] When examining these Malay claims, one could observe how the political aims of the Malay elite had made them perhaps view even minor differences out of due proportion. It was true that Malays were generally the more liberal group among the Muslims of Ceylon. But it is arguable whether this in itself was a valid reason for separatism and separate representation. Indeed, it emerged that Malay insistence on their institutional difference had a great deal to do with a grievance arising out of

the attitude of a few Moor leaders in Colombo; the misunderstanding was around the affairs of the prestigious Maradana Mosque in Colombo. Malay separatist spokesmencomplained that they (Malays) were totally excluded from the Board of Electors of the mosque; and that they were 'debarred from even being classified as members of the congregation'.[28] If 'discrimination' did exist, it was owing to the failure of a closed group of Moor leaders of Colombo who controlled the affairs of this mosque. The affair could have been, and indeed was, interpreted as a slight to the whole Malay community. But in fact the parties mainly involved were a small but influential group of Moors and a small groupof Malay elite who considered themselves unjustly treated in the affair of the mosque.

There were minor economic tensions too that could have contributed to the growth of Malay separatism. It was true that economically there was hardly an area where the Malays and the Moors competed. The Moors were mainly a commercial and an agricultural community. And the Malays were mainly concentrated in the Police Force and the Government clerical service.[29] But here was obviously an area where tensions seemed to have been built more on imaginary than on real grievances. The Malays complained of an 'atmosphere' or an 'attitude of mind' among Moors against their economic progress. Akbar, for instance, speaking of his own experiences, was to observe

> 'the Moors are jealous of the Malays. When I started my practice they boycotted me. They tried their best to put us down.'[30]

Then of course there were the political reasons for the growth of tension between the Moors and the Malays. The Malays asserted that they wanted to be separately represented because they were anxious to preserve their political identity; they wanted to have representatives of their own to voice their needs and grievances.[31] Their view was that the existing system of Muslim communal representation (the Manning arrangement) did not ensure the return of Malay representatives: that all Muslim seats would be 'captured and usurped by the Moors whose voters outnumber the Malay voters...and a Malay candidate would not even have a peep at the polls'.[32]

However, one area that the Malay separatists seemed to have disregarded was the Moor vote and the goodwill that must have gone into the election of T.B. Jayah, a Malay, as a Muslim communal member; and the possibility that this goodwill could continue in the future. And Jayah himself was to provide a reason to strengthen the belief that there was more to the separatist call by Malay leaders than the fear of Moor dominance of the Muslim electorate. Jayah's case was that the separatist tendency was the ambition of the few who were trying to drag their community with them. Speaking of the newly-formed Malay organisation to agitate for separate treatment, the Malay Political Association, Jayah observed,

> 'the so-called Malay Political Association was perhaps a refuge for aspirants to the Legislative Council seats and it counted at least two members who failed to get seats in the Council in the last elections and who were endeavouring to drag in a third who had met with a similar disappointment'.[33]

Jayah doubtless had a strong argument there. It was true that the leaders of the Malay separatist movement were men with social influence in their community. And it is reasonable to believe that they would have liked to convert this social influence to political power; a conversion that was possible only if their community had a recognised political existence; because, after all, it would have been evident to them that only a man of Jayah's stature - and such a stature was hard to find among the small Malay community - could have successfully tried his hand at Muslim communal politics. Jayah's over-enthusiasm for Muslim unity evidently ensnared him to make these allegations; they were of course scarcely calculated to win back the withdrawing Malay separatists; on the other hand, he did here provide a reasonable explanation for the behaviour of the separatists.

Having discussed the separatist tendency of the Malays, we can now enquire into the nature of the second secessionist group - the 'right-wing' Moors and their separatist tendencies. This group was made up of a few, but influential, Moors, mainly from the homogeneous Moor concentrations in the Southern and South-Western coastal areas. This was a group of Moor elites, who were Western-educated and had become relatively wealthy through trade and had mainly developed

apart from the more liberal and outward looking Moor community of Colombo; and perhaps because of this they resented the concentration of Muslim political power in the hands of wealthy Colombo Muslims - all three Muslim communal members were from Colombo.

The reason provided by them for their claim for separate Moorish representation instead of the existing Muslim representation was that the Malay group of Muslims was demanding separate representation of their own; in other words, that their attitude was a reaction to Malay demands; that they too did not want 'to be put into the melting pot' and to be called Muslims.[34] But the tone of their demand revealed much more. They argued that originally representation was granted to the Moors alone and that it was only in 1924 that the electorate was termed the Mohammedan Electorate and Malays 'permitted' to vote in it. They protested against this 'innovation' and demanded the 'substitution of the term Moorish instead, to give effect to the real intent and meaning of the term Mohammedan'. They had 'no objection' to Malay representation as long as such representation was not taking away from the seats already granted them under the Mohammedan Electorate.[35] This attitude could be interpreted in two ways: that the Moors- at least this group of Moors - did not consider the Malays as Mohammedans; and that they claimed the present Mohammedan Electorate (three seats) for Moors alone. Indeed, this latter reason becomes comprehensible when one realises that the election of Jayah, from a tiny minority among them (Malays), could have been resented by an ambitious group of Moors from the Provinces, who would have been anxious to fill the vacancy. There is of course no doubt that in an age when they were surrounded by the nationalist mood - after all there were the emerging Sinhalese, Tamil and Malay nationalism - ~~that~~ an awakening Moorish nationalism could have been partly responsible for the separatist mood; but the political ambitions of the 'right wing' Moor group cannot be ruled out at least as a contributory factor for this tendency.

Then there is the third secessionist Muslim group: the Eastern Province Moors. As noted earlier, this Moor group, which lived in homogeneous Moor villages in the Eastern coast and engaged in agriculture, differed much from their co-relig-

ionists elsewhere in the Island; they were perhaps the most conservative and generally the least educated from among the Muslims in Ceylon. Here too the separatist tendency did not seem to be separable from political hopes of a few Moor elite there who were prepared to use a regional grievance for their own purposes. Thus, these Eastern Moor elite spoke of the impracticability of the general communal electorate for the Muslims. The three present communal members from Colombo, they pointed out, only paid a 'flying visit' to the East 'about election time' and after that 'nobody ever saw the colour of these three members'. They had also an economic grievance to support their claim for their own representative. It was said to be well nigh impossible for Muslims outside the district (East) to represent them: because, 'the area is almost entirely agricultural and the Muslims who live in other districts are chiefly engaged in commercial activities.'[36] Their demand was that they should be given an electorate of their own, to elect their own representative; or at least, that one of the communal seats should be 'earmarked' for the Eastern Muslims.[37]

The period immediately prior to the arrival of the Commission witnessed a level of Muslim political activity that the country had never witnessed before. The picture drawn above of the various groups within the Muslim camp would provide the necessary background to the understanding of the many Muslim associations that came into being or were refurbished in preparation for the Commission. The leading Muslim political association, the Muslim Political Association - specially formed for the purpose of the Commission and the spokesman for Muslim rights in general - turned out to be an association of leading Moors of Colombo.[38] In a communal electorate based on a limited franchise, the leaders of this Colombo group - N.H.N. Abdul Cader, H.M. Macan Markar and T.B. Jayah - were elected because Colombo in the Western Province commanded the majority of those votes. Though, no doubt supported by a number of sincere Muslim leaders and small associations in the Provinces, this association presented the main case for Muslim unity: that is, the continuation of the political unity of all ethnic and regional Muslim groups under the banner of Islam. Though obviously these Colombo leaders were sincerely desirous of Muslim unity - and this contention is support-

ed by the fact that their regional and ethnic loyalties were weaker and that their liberal tendencies more pronounced than those of other Muslim groups - this desire for unity itself was subject to possible misunderstanding. This was because this group stood to gain the most politically by Muslim unity and was to lose the most in the event of separatism: there was the possibility that the Commission would decide to distribute what they had already won to the various contending parties - to the Malays and to the regions - if an open and shut case for Muslim unity were not provided.

And even as hostilities mounted between Moors and Malays in the days immediately prior to the arrival of the Commission, the Muslim Political Association was to witness a serious fragmentation in the withdrawal from it of the 'right-wing' element of Moors - already referred to - to form their own Moors' Political Association. The Eastern Moors, on the other hand, formed their own association - the Batticoloa People's Association - to present their own case. The Malays were on their own. The older Malay organisation, the All-Ceylon Malay Association, which, in the past, had taken a lead in Muslim progress and Islamic modernism, was now fired by the new mood of Malay identity. Even though the Malays preferred not to compromise the name of the organisation, the bulk of its leadership - such as M.L.M. Reyal, M.K. Saldin, Z.H. Mantara - assembled under a new name and a new face, the Malay Political Association, in time for the sessions of the Commission. A number of provincial Malay organisations too, such as the Kandy Malay Association, joined in to be outspoken supporters of Malay separatism.

When the Commission began its sessions, various Muslim deputations representing their groups appeared before them to present evidence. And as these groups defended their positions - already outlined above - the Commission could not have missed the fact that Muslim ranks were in disarray and that the relations between the groups had reached their nadir. Indeed the Muslim events outside the sessions, in the country, and which were given wide publicity in the national newspapers, would have only heightened their recognition of this fact. The argument between the groups had degenerated into a shouting match.

Protest meetings were held to complain about the attitudes of other groups. For example, a reference by a Malay leader, Z.H. Mantara, to Moors as 'thamby' - a local term for the Moors which they evidently resented - during a Malay public meeting in Colombo, and the Malay M.J. Majid's reference to incidents connected with the Maradana Mosque as 'discrimination' against the Malays by the Moors, during the evidence of the Malay Political Association before the Commission became subjects for protest meetings; a number of Moor associations throughout the Island resolved:

> 'we express profound indignation at the insulting and uncalled for remarks made by M.J. Majid, the spokesman of the so-called Malay deputation before the Special Commission at Kandy, and also condemn the attitude of Mr. Z.H. Mantara in using the term "thamby" to designate the Moors which is highly offensive, at the Malay Mass Meeting in Colombo...'

The Malays were asked to 'tender collectively and individually an unqualified apology on or before the 7th day of January 1928;' and that in the event of their failure to do so, they were to be boycotted.[39]

The Malay reply was not very helpful for better relations, either. The Moors were accused of being 'petulant' and 'silly',to be upset over a word; and indeed, Majid lashed out:

> 'we preferred and will always prefer the company of the progressive Malays to that of the backward Moors. That is why we claim a separate Malay seat.'[40]

The rest of the Ceylonese generally took no sides in this internal misunderstanding of the Muslims. But when the dispute took the proportions it did, some of the national newspapers became deeply critical of the inability of the Muslim leadership to settle their quarrels peaceably. The Ceylon Independent, for instance, editorialised on this

> "ignominious squabble which does little credit either to the communities in particular or to the country in general. At first the discussion assumed a reasonable tone not unworthy of argument....It is indeed regrettable that in so short a time the dispute should have descended to the level of vulgar abuse'.[41]

The outcome of this internal warfare was the weakening of the main Muslim case for the continuation of communal representation for the Muslims in the Constitution, and, for that matter, the weakening of the case for communal representation generally. Governor Stanley, who had nothing particularly against communal representation as a way out for the communal problems in Ceylon, began to doubt

the wisdom of the continuation of the system. He advised the Commission privately that they ought to find a way to do away with communal representation 'seeing the problem of Moors and Malays'.[42]

Even the Commissioners expressed their doubts about religious communal representation to a Muslim deputation. Sir Matthew Nathan commented: 'I see certain advantages in representation but the general desire to get rid of representatives of special communities may justify the abandonment of those advantages if a reasonable substitute can be found'. Sir Matthew proposed such a substitute: a 'permanent committee (say of Muslims) who will be consulted by the Legislative Council - a practice to refer all questions which affect the Muslim community?'[43]

The Muslim leadership - at least those who fought for Muslim unity - would not hear of it. Extra-conciliar committees, they protested, would not be able to prevent harmful legislation; and, indeed, Macan Markar observed that representations, objections and memorials to the Governor after harmful legislation would be like 'shutting the stable door after the horse had bolted.'[44]

The fact that the conflict occurred during the period of the Commission would naturally raise the question whether it had any part in the conflict. The conclusion that would seem unavoidable is that the Commission did play a part but, one must hasten to add, only as an occasion or as a catalyst to hasten the conflict. In other words, that the conflict was inevitable and that the Commission provided a suitable climate for its eruption. Indeed, as has already been mentioned, there had been a growth of a politically conscious, and perhaps politically ambitious, Muslim elite among the minority Malays and in the Moor concentrations in the Provinces; the communal system of Muslim electorates had encouraged their hopes of using the local Muslim votes to dislodge those who had hitherto run Muslim affairs - the Colombo Muslims; the Commission, on the other hand had been presented - thanks mainly to Clifford's statements - as the ultimate arbiter of Ceylonese political hopes. In this climate, therefore, it was only natural and inevitable that the separatist elites make a last ditch stand to wrest some political power for themselves and that the Commission was

to become a veritable theatre of conflict for these groups. Then again, it would not be true to say that the Commission handled the question carelessly and thus helped fan the latent embers into a fire of conflict: an analysis of the evidence shows that the questioning was carefully done; and, if at all, the Commission was a healing and a quelling influence by its soothing words and its appeals for Muslim unity.[45]

When the Report of the Commissioners appeared, it was found that the sections dealing with the Muslims contained some of the hardest words against Manning's makeshift policy of communal representation. If communal representation, based on ethnic considerations, was divisive and damaging enough to communal relations, the Report argued, the exceptional case of Muslim representation based on religion was also inconsistent. Communal representation was said to be 'least desirable' when on a religious basis 'because religious tolerance is essential in a country with any approach to democratic institutions': and ' 'there should be no need for the protection for a particular faith which special representation of that faith in the Legislature implies.'

The Commissioners had discovered that communal representation was not only divisive of society generally but that it has, what they called, a 'disintegrating effect' on the various communities themselves. They had discovered in the Muslim community a glaring example of such a disintegration.

The Report's solution was the abolition of communal representation from the face of Ceylon's politics. The Muslims themselves were relieved of their three communal representatives, and were advised, like others, to be 'identified with the general electorate'. The Report hoped, of course, that Muslims would achieve representation but that they would 'obtain entrance as territorial members and not as religious representatives.' The Commission, which was aware of the Muslim community's chequered history in Ceylon, and which witnessed its internal problems, no doubt genuinely wished its long-term welfare when it made its recommendations. The Report observed that its recommendations

> 'may not be immediately acceptable to the general body of Muslims, but we are satisfied that there is little fear of religious intolerance in Ceylon, and that it will be in the best interests of the Muslims themselves that

> communal representation for them should cease and they should now be identified with the general electorate.'[46]

Not unpredictably, the Muslims, - mainly Moors - were deeply upset. In a number of public meetings, they protested against the Report's recommendations. Muslim associations memorialized the Secretary of State on the 'unworkability' and the 'impracticability' of the proposals with regard to the Muslims.[47] One 'impractical' proposal mentioned at most protest meetings, was the granting of the franchise to women, who, it was said, 'by custom, usage and the laws of the faith' were 'prohibited' from going about publicly.[48]

In a long and bitter memorandum to the Secretary of State, T.B. Jayah complained that the Commissioners' conclusions as regards communal representation were not based on the evidence placed before them. Jayah's arguments revealed the Ceylon Muslim's lively interest in Indian political developments: the Donoughmore findings were said to be 'contradicted by the findings of the Simon Commission as regards India, where the "communal canker" was even worse.' Jayah's contention was that Simon had recommended the continuance of communal representation in India for the same reasons that Donoughmore abolished it in Ceylon, and in the circumstances

> 'the Muslims in Ceylon justly feel that they have been differently treated from their co-religionists in India and look with confidence to the authorities in England to redress the wrong that has been done to them.'[49]

Jayah went further. He met Lord Passfield, the Secretary of State, in London. When he discovered that Passfield had made up his mind about the Report's recommendations and that no concessions were forthcoming, he begged at least that if 'one or none are elected, they would be remembered when members are nominated.'[50] Passfield, however, gave 'general assurances of sympathy but refused to promise' anything.[51]

In the General Election of 1931, based on the Donoughmore Constitution, only one Muslim was elected.[52] After the elections, the Governor nominated the Malay leader, M.K. Saldin to the State Council. This was significant. Though Saldin's nomination was supposed to make up for the under-representation of the Muslims generally, the gesture was in fact an official recognition of Malay

political claims.

The election results were the occasion for a fresh wave of Muslim protest. A mass meeting of Muslims in Colombo was convened to 'record their sense of injury and to demand the revision of the Constitution.'[53] A Muslim memorandum demanded that 'statutory provision should be made to ensure the return of an adequate number of Muslim elected members'.[54]

The new Governor, Graeme Thomson, who was consulted on the Muslim political unrest, and about the Muslim desire to meet the Secretary of State again, warned the Colonial Office that it would be a 'waste of time' as the Muslims had no new case to present. Indeed, Thomson had discovered that Jayah and Abdul Cader, who led the protest, were not the defenders of the faith that they claimed to be. He commented that,

> 'the deputation, who represented their case with a marked lack of ability, wholly failed to convince me that there is any danger that Muslim interests will be disregarded by the State Council. The objections...appeared to me to be purely theoretical, and I have little doubt that the movement to approach you in the matter has been largely engineered by Messrs. Jayah and Abdul Cader who are disappointed at not having obtained seats in the State Council themselves.'[55]

Even this controversy demonstrated that the Muslim wounds of the Donoughmore Session days had not been completely healed. A counter-memorial from the Eastern Province Muslims denied their disenchantment with the Donoughmore proposals and disowned any deputation that might be sent in the name of the'Muslims of Ceylon'.[56] This latter development was not altogether unwelcome at the Colonial Office, W.M.R. Croise, of the Ceylon Department at the Colonial Office, minuted characteristically thatit is

> 'not an unwelcome complication as the Secretary of State will have some reason to delay the whole thing and convince them of their unrepresentative nature'.[57]

In spite of all advice to the contrary, a Muslim deputation led by Jayah decided to proceed to London. They found the Secretary of State 'very busy' and only a Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State - Sir Robert Hamilton - prepared to meet them. Sir Robert, who listened to their fears of 'political submersion' offered them a great deal of sympathy but hardly any hopes of revising the Constitution for their sakes.

Judging from its treatment of the Muslims, one could discover a definite change of Colonial Office thinking and attitude towards minority complaints. Earlier, in the balance of power days of Manning, the minorities and their fears of 'majority domination' were often welcomed at the Colonial Office. But now the reception given to the Muslims, as it was in the case of the Tamils, was cool indeed. What brought about the transformation?

There are at least two possible explanations. One reason is that it was perhaps a belated but determined effort to regain a lost reputation. The fact was that the Colonial Office had not emerged altogether unscathed from the Donoughmore exercise. The Donoughmore strictures upon communal representation and its share in the worsening of communal relations in Ceylon were, no doubt, directed against Manning. But the Colonial Office, which had supported the policy could not miss the message; its feeling of guilt was no less. The Colonial Office officialdom tried to maintain a stiff upper lip, but the pain was evident. The old experiment had failed. The new mood was to plunge headlong into the new experiment: the Donoughmore experiment.

A second reason could be discovered in the political developments in Britain itself. The Colonial Office was increasingly under pressure from the House of Commons, and mainly from Labour spokesmen, about Colonial events; and particularly about the Colonial Office's handling of communal tensions in the Colonies. At question time, an increasing number of questions of a very embarrassing nature were being asked. The happenings in the Indian subcontinent, and mainly the Hindu-Muslim tensions there, had, no doubt, created parliamentary and extra-parliamentary interest in similar problems elsewhere in the Colonies. In such a changed political climate, it seems reasonable to believe that the Colonial Office could not but reflect the change.

But the bitterness arising out of their disappointments did not seem to have led them to a mood of total despondency. There were signs that the more thoughtful among the leadership were prepared to sit back and view their political future objectively. The assessment seemed to have revealed, at least to a substantial body of Muslim opinion, the futility of further agitation

against the new Constitution; and that the sensible attitude was to spend their political energies to make the best use of the Constitution. Indeed, this area of Muslim opinion was prepared to go along with the Donoughmore view that,

> 'the Muslim community in Ceylon have for centuries served a useful purpose, especially as traders and merchants ...and that as long as they contribute, as they do now, by their special qualities to the general prosperity and welfare of the country, there is little likelihood that their interests will be adversely affected by any action of the Legislative Council'.[58]

b) THE BURGHERS

The Eurasians in Ceylon - the descendants of the children of Portuguese, Dutch and British marriages with Ceylonese - came to be known as the Burghers. There was, however, a great deal of controversy over the use of the term Burgher for all Eurasians. The controversy, which surfaced during the discussion on constitutional reforms in the first and second decades of the 20th century, was around the efforts of the Dutch group to reserve the exclusive use of the term to themselves. The term was obviously full of meaning and significance to the Dutch Burgher community. But that the other Ceylonese groups barely recognised this fact was evident from their use, and continued use, of the term indiscriminately for all the Eurasians.[59] One obvious reason for this Ceylonese attitude was the difficulty encountered in differentiating between the Dutch Burghers and the rest of the Eurasian population. Even compilers of census reports, though they admitted that the term is 'frequently and incorrectly used to describe all persons of mixed descent', continued to place the Burghers and Eurasians under one category.[60]

The Dutch group argued that the indiscriminate use of the term was a 'circumstance of urgent hardship, embarrassment and disquietude' because it is 'unsound in principle, is in violation of established usage and opposed to historical fact'. Their grievance was that by the 'reckless' use of the term 'outsiders' have been 'foisted' on their community creating a serious 'anomaly and humiliation of an ancient and honourable community'.[61] The 'outsiders' were mainly the descendants of the Portuguese, whom the Dutch Burghers often slight-

ingly described as the 'mechanics' or 'Tupasses' who 'formed a lower class'.[62]

The name 'Burgher', the Dutch Burghers argued, was of Dutch origin, being the name of an 'influential and prominant class in Holland'. During the Dutch period in Ceylon (1656-1796), there were the 'Company's Servants' - the officials of the Dutch East India Company - and the 'Burghers' - the Dutch civilians, who together formed socially the Hollandsche Natie in Ceylon. The Dutch Burghers were said to be their descendants. But what was important to the Dutch Burgher argument was that they had been able 'to preserve an unbroken descent from the race that ruled here before the arrival of the British'. They were thus not 'mixed' as, for instance, the Portuguese group was - at least on the paternal side.[63] Indeed, 'if the right to be denominated Burgher be once lost by the legitimate father being a Sinhalese or other Indian, it cannot be recovered'.[64] There was, however, one exception to the strict rule of Dutch paternity of the Dutch Burghers: that the father could be any other European. By the application of this exception children of Burgher females by marriage with Europeans were admitted into the Dutch Burgher fold. The Dutch Burgher Union, founded in 1908, laid down the qualifications for membership as follows:

> 'any Dutch descendant of full age and respectable standing in the community, should be eligible as a member of the Union. The term 'Dutch descendant' shall include the descendants in the male line of all those of Euro' pean nationality who were in the service or under the rule of the Dutch East India Company in Ceylon, and the children of such descendants in the female line by marriage with Europeans.'

The purpose of the whole Dutch Burgher exercise, therefore, seemed to be to demonstrate the European quality of their race and, by implication, the repudiation of their Ceylonese connection. This aspect became clear in the Burgher anxiety to play down the dilution of European blood in them and their preoccupation with 'complexion'. The authoritative Dutch Burgher Union document, The Burghers of Ceylon' probed history to minimize the Ceylonese connection: in the early days of the Dutch, it discovered that,

> 'marriages with natives of the Island, was, as a rule, prohibited; but at the date of the conquest of the forts by the Dutch there were numerous Portuguese women and women of mixed Portuguese and Sinhalese descent whom the Dutch soldiers were encouraged to marry.'[65]

Whether the Dutch were so elective about their alliances, in a period when there were virtually no European women in Ceylon, is arguable. On the other hand, there was nothing unusual or surprising in this Dutch Burgher claim to a connection with a group outside Ceylon. A number of other Ceylonese groups were engaged in similar exercises: the Sinhalese Karawas, for instance, in order no doubt, to undermine the position of the Goyigamas, who were said to be sudras, claimed to be ksatriya warriors from the Kuru country of India, and hence were Karawa or Kaurawa;[66] the Wahumpuras, evidently for similar reasons, considered themselves 'Ksatriya princes of the Sakya dynasty' of India;[67] and the Malays, in order to emphasise their difference from the Moors, constantly referred to their connection with the Malay States.

The Dutch Burgher preoccupation with 'complexion' was no less evident. The Burghers of Ceylon also provided some reasons for the present complexion of some Burghers: it observed that,

> 'of the present day Burghers some, it may be mentioned, are of pure European descent, as may be seen from their complexion; but climatic influence, owing to many of the families having been in the Island for over 200 years, has in most cases tanned and darkened their skin. Others show by their brown complexion the strain of Sinhalese blood which has percolated into their veins through the early alliances referred to. The Burghers have almost invariably married within their own community, and direct marriages with natives have been rare'.[68]

Some observers discovered even a class connotation in the Dutch Burghers' repudiation of the Portuguese section of the Community. E.B. Denham, the Census Commissioner, observed that the Dutch Burghers were the more educated class, providing the country with professional men and clerical servants; while

> 'the large majority of Portuguese descendants form an entirely different class, usually known as the mechanic class 'almost exclusively devoted to the lower crafts of artisanship. They are usually shoemakers, tailors or blacksmiths, and their conservatism is such that few, if hardly any, are known to have grown out of their ancestral callings'.[69]

There were others who even suggested a certain caste angle to the Dutch Burgher attitudes to the rest of the community; that is, that they considered themselves a caste in relation to others in the caste-bound society that is Ceylon. Central to this caste explanation was their special relationship with the so-called 'first class' Goyigamas;[70] the conclusion being that in their

desire to associate in a special manner with a traditionally high caste group they were in fact claiming high caste status. Their predilection for high caste society was, no doubt, indicated in their attitude and thinking. One could not, for instance, miss the message of a Burgher gentleman's lament over the passing of the old order: 'in place of the Sinhalese grandee' he observed 'we have parvenus everywhere striving to hustle out the age-old families'.[71]

But then, the caste explanation of the relationship seems rather simplistic. In fact, other, perhaps more credible interpretations are possible. The Burgher rapport with the traditionally privileged 'first class' Goyigamas could be viewed in the context of the anxiety of both groups to preserve an advantageous status quo in the political and economic fields. On the other hand, too, the caste theory seems to falter when one considers the general Burgher attitudes to other caste groups. The Burghers were known to associate with all caste groups and perhaps were a powerful influence in lowering the rigid barriers of caste in Ceylonese society. The Burghers' constant success at local Government elections, even during the period under discussion, was, if anything, an indication of their public spirit and their basically caste-free attitudes.

The Burghers of Ceylon may also be compared with the Anglo-Indians of India. The tendency to overstress their European connection and the preoccupation with their skin colour, which observers have remarked about the Anglo-Indians, did not seem to be too different from similar tendencies and preoccupations of the Burghers of Ceylon.[72] Then again, the Anglo-Indian tendency to repudiate connections with the Feringhees[73] - the descendants of the Portuguese - bears a likeness to the Burgher repudiation of Tupasses in Ceylon. But, on the other hand, the comparison may not be justifiably pushed too far. For instance, while the Anglo-Indians were understandably orienting to a dominant group - the British, the Burghers were referring to a group, the Dutch, whose glories were past; though doubtless, the latter's attempts were a search for a cultural identity with the Europeans, through the Dutch connection. Again, the observed deep-seated prejudices, and often the snobbery of the Anglo-Indians vis-à-vis the

Indians did not seem to be present in comparable proportions in the Burgher relations with other Ceylonese.[74]

Nevertheless, a comparison can be useful in the understanding of the psychology and the attitudes of the two groups. It is revealing, for instance, how two comparable groups, placed in similar conditions, react similarly to given situations. The Anglo-Indian desire to identify with the British was said to be explainable in political, economic and psychological terms: politically and economically because of the advantages of identifying with the dominant group, who are able to dole out political and economic blessings; and psychologically because of the very need to conceal the 'mixed' quality of their community by clinging to a dominant group - which alignment they obviously felt required to seek because of the caste society they lived in and which perhaps explains the tendency to shed connections with more mixed groups who would obviously drag them to the marginal state from which they are attempting to escape.[75] Such explanations could, reasonably, be applied to understand similar trends in Dutch Burgher attitude and opinion in Ceylon. On the other hand, too, the behaviour of the two groups seemed to arouse similar reactions among the Indians and the Ceylonese: though understandable in a Colonial context, such attitudes were viewed with increasing resentment in a period of nationalist revival and in an age of definite antagonism to the Colonial power. Even if the reaction may not have been 'contempt and indifference to the loyal progeny of the whites' as in India, resentment for Dutch Burgher attitudes was undeniable in Ceylon.

In sum, therefore, we could view the Burgher attitude to exclude the other Eurasian groups from their ranks and their desire to be identified with the Europeans as a sincere, and certainly understandable, search for identity and an attempt to rid themselves of a confusion (with another group) for which they were not responsible. But of course this could be, and indeed was, interpreted to be a Dutch Burgher attempt to monopolise the Burgher Electorate - to be discussed later in this study - by excluding the other Eurasians from it; and worse, be cause of the emphasis on the European connection and complexion, it could be viewed as indicative of a 'superiority complex'. One may no doubt wonder at

the justifiability of such interpretations and resentments coming from a society like Ceylon with its caste hierarchies and caste conflicts; but the interpretations and the resentments were there all the same.

The Nineteenth Century was a relatively peaceful one for the Burgher community generally. In an unchallenged Colonial setting, this deeply Western-oriented group found economic security and a relative cultural and emotional stability. Their capacity and readiness to fill the employment opportunities ensured their economic security. There were a number of factors why they, before any other group, were able to seize these opportunities. Their proficiency in the English Language was one such factor: their adoption of English as their mother-tongue had enabled them to benefit first from the early, and mainly Missionary, endeavours in English education. A second reason was that a tradition of service under Britain's Colonial predecessors - mainly Dutch - had provided them with the necessary training and know-how to fill the new vacancies, chiefly in the Government clerical service. A third, and perhaps a more important reason, was that their ethnic, religious, psychological and linguistic affinities with the new rulers had made them the obvious choice to provide trustworthy pivots and wheels for the Colonial machine. And as the British Colonial rule progressed, the Burghers, by their devotion to duty, their steadfastness and faithfulness in service, made themselves the invaluable allies of the Colonial Government.

The British, on their side, were not slow to recognize and appreciate the services of the Burghers. The Colonial Secretary-historian Sir Emmerson Tennent wrote of them in 1860:

> 'it is not possible to speak too highly of the services of this meritorious body of men, by whom the whole machinery of Government is put into action, They may fairly be described in the language of Sir Robert Peel as the "brazen wheels" of the executive which keep the golden hands in motion.'[76]

Moreover, by the middle of the 19th Century, besides their predominance in the Government service, they had been able virtually to monopolize the professions too. In the medical, judicial and educational world, for example, Burghers were barely excelled in skill and eminence. Economically, therefore, as a community, the Burghers had done well.

In the 19th century also, their economic security combined with a certain emotional and cultural stability to ensure the well-being of the community. Widely removed from the Ceylonese majority in respect of ethnic origins, language and religion, the group naturally moved in the direction of identification with the dominant Europeans who offered them greater possibilities of social acceptance. Hence their choice of a Western style of livin g which has reflected in their speech, dress, food-habits and recreational patterns. Though not wholeheartedly accepted, and often snubbed by the Europeans, the orientation had been logical in the circumstances.[77] But a culture to identify with, especially when it was the dominant one, provided them with a sense of emotional security. Their tendency to assert, perhaps over-assert, their European quality may be understood in this context; it was an essentially marginal community's groping for identity; hence, their search for cultural and emotional security.

But already at the turn of the century there were all the signs of a gathering storm over their economic and social equilibrium. There were first the developments in the social and political scene in Ceylon: mainly the growth, and the political, social and economic ambitions of the new Ceylonese elite. Secondly, there were the Colonial Government's own reactions to these developments, mainly by way of constitutional reforms.

Burgher reactions to the new elites' first stirrings were revealing. They were prepared to go along with, and indeed lead, the elite agitation so long as it remained one of protest against the Government's policy of restricting higher employment for the Ceylonese. They were, however, anything but enthusiastic supporters of any agitation for major constitutional reforms. Their attitude was not surprising. They were the most affected by the Government's policy on Ceylonese employment because they had the highest percentage of literacy and English education among the Ceylonese, while, on the other hand, they had reason to be suspicious of any reforms that would obviously elevate the position of Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim elite in the Legislature. To a community that had enjoyed a dominant position within the Ceylonese community during the 19th cen-

tury, a decision to support such reforms would have been seen as an invitation to political suicide.[78]

In this respect, at least, the Burghers led the way in exclusivist communal thinking in the political field from among the communities in Ceylon; and this during a period when there was a tendency among the elite of various Ceylonese groups to forget their communal differences within a concerted Reform Movement. In fact, the Burghers went further in becoming the first group in Ceylon to enter upon exclusivist political agitation when they inaugurated the Dutch Burgher Union in 1908 to agitate for strictly Burgher demands.[79]

The Government's response to the Reform Movement proved to be even more disturbing to the Burgher balance. As we know, McCallum, in 1910, singled out the Burghers for special treatment: while the Burgher community was provided with a Legislative Council seat, only one seat - the Educated Ceylonese Seat - was conceded to the elite of all the other Ceylonese communities put together.

As observed earlier, too, the Ceylonese had a not unpredictable explanation for McCallum's action: that when he was pushed into a position of reform, his reforming purpose arose not from a doctrinaire liberalism but from a shrewd calculation of Government's advantage; and that his motive was to cripple Ceylonese elite unity by diverting an active and energetic section away from the Reform Movement. If such was McCallum's calculation, he was successful indeed. The Burghers were to stand aloof from the Reform Movement ever afterwards.

The reforms were to produce wider and long term effects on the fortunes of the Burgher community. The reforms tended to widen the gulf between the Burghers and other Ceylonese communities by pushing an already culturally isolated community into deeper political isolation as well. Indeed, this isolation was heightened by the behaviour of the Dutch Burghers in particular in the aftermath of the reforms.

The Dutch Burghers openly demanded the exclusion of 'outsiders' - meaning the Portuguese variety - from the Burgher electorate. The argument could be seen to expose their deep-seated prejudices against other groups in Ceylon. Directly,

of course, the argument was directed against the less socially-advantaged 'mechanics', but its implications were not lost on other Ceylonese communities. The 'mechanics' were to be 'repudiated' because they did not fulfil the 'racial test' of 'European paternity' and 'unbroken legitimacy'.[80] But the Dutch Burgher argument could be interpreted to mean that the more mixed 'mechanics' were not good enough for their electorate because they were not European enough.

But the Dutch Burghers were only being logical. They were claiming a seat that McCallum had designated the Burgher Seat, with the aid of their own definition of Burgher. If there was any illogicality it was the official misnaming of what was intended to be an Eurasian electorate as the term Burgher electorate. But whatever the logic of their action, at the conclusion of the exercise, the Dutch Burghers could not claim to have won deeper esteem and sympathy from the rest of the Ceylonese community.

McCallum, the prime mover in this chain of events, found himself in a tight spot. He defended himself with a weak excuse that he 'did not for one moment contemplate its being restricted to one favoured section'.[81]

But perhaps the deeper significance of the McCallum Reforms for the Burgher community was not the political isolationism they offered but the isolationist attitude they engendered. It was only a handful of Burgher rebels who dared venture out of the cocoon to join forces with the gathering Reform Movement, during and after the Great War (1914-1918). When the Ceylon National Congress was inaugurated in 1919, only G.A.H. Wille from among the Burgher leadership was on the Congress platform. But if Wille's presence on the side of reform was an indication of Burgher doubts about isolationism, his own isolation and his later decision to abandon Congress politics was indicative of the strength of Burgher isolationist forces. A political observer was to describe Wille's dilemma; he observed that

> 'until the creation of this electorate in 1910, the Burghers used to join the rest of the population in every public movement. But from that year the members of the Burgher community have studiously avoided making common cause with the rest. Mr. Wille, but only for a time, showed a broader outlook with the result that he was defeated when he came forward for the Burgher seat in the election of 1921. At the second election he was successful, but the price he had to pay was his public recantation of the Congress

creed of which he had hitherto been a stalwart champion.'[82] Wille thus became the 'renegade angel' who preferred to 'reign in Burgherdom than to serve in the Congress'.[83]

The Burgher breakway from Congress politics was, in any case, inevitable. Being the scattered minority that they were and not ungenerously treated by the British, they would have least benefitted from Congress hopes of territorial electorates and self-government. Away from Congress they could join the rest of the minorities - in the aftermath of the Congress split in 1921 - in a solid demand for communal representation and attempt the postponement of the day of self-government. Such, indeed, was the Burgher policy after 1921. But the minority agitation for communal representation, prior to the Manning Reforms of 1924, reflected the change in the political scene in Ceylon: the Tamils had taken over the leadership in the minority struggle and the Burghers had only a relatively subordinate role to play.

In keeping with his philosophy of balance of power, Manning in 1924, was generous to the Burgher minority. In the new reforms the Burghers received three representatives in the Legislative Council - two elected on special Burgher electorates and another nominated by the Governmor.[84] They had reason to be satisfied with the outcome of the reforms; because, in making a general rule of what had been in their case an exception, Manning had provided some respite from their sense of isolation.

It was indeed a respite. The announcement of the appointment of a special Commission in early 1927 was to mar their mood of elation. They had to repeat the arguments and fight the battle all over again; with this difference, that they had a number of fellow-travellors - other minorities - to support them.

The Burghers were perhaps more fortunate than other minorities in having only one official organization - the Dutch Burgher Union or D.B.U. - to fight their case. There were no conflicting groups to advance embarrassing views. The D.B.U. case before the Commission was one for the continuation of communal representation; and it was a very strong case too. There was, first, the traditional Burgher argument that communal representation was the only hope of poli-

tical 'salvation' for the 'scattered tribe' that they were: and this was indeed a fair assessment of the conditions as they were: the tiny, urban, Burgher community of 32,000 in 1926 (that is, all Eurasians) was spread over the leading towns of the Island; and even in Colombo, where the majority of Burghers resided, there was no territorial unit where they were the predominant community. To have claimed that, in their case, there was no hope of election except through a communal scheme was correct. A second argument was predictably based on history: that thanks to the 'benefits' of British rule they had always enjoyed special consideration. To this was added an argument based on 'sentiment': that they were only being true to the 'universal' tendency of race consciousness; and that in a world 'moving towards internationalism on the basis of small communities' they too desired to be counted among the rest. These two last arguments were obviously the fruits of a long history of communal representation; first, what was given could not be taken away without causing a sense of hurt; and second, the policy of communal representation - or the way it had been allocated to the various groups - had led the communities to regard representation as a concession to group 'sentiment'. These arguments were, therefore, the logical outcome of the policy of communal representation as practised in Ceylon; and they were thus predictable.

But their case, too, revealed their peculiar fears and tensions about the future, mainly their fears for their economic standing; the question of representation was said to be specially relevant when there were pressures to make the vernacular the official language, when English education was threatened and when appointments and scholarships were in question. That Burgher fear of discrimination in the matter of appointments and scholarships was not unfounded became evident from some statements of Wille before the Commission; he noted:

> 'there was a question of appointing 3 young doctors to medical scholarships in the United States. Well, there was fear on the part of some communal members that a certain community might be favoured, and so, 2 communal representatives were chosen as a sort of committee to aid the Director of Medical and Sanitary Services; now, when some of the Finance Committee came to hear of that they became alarmed. I (Wille) was appointed to this committee. The 3 best men were chosen and it so happened that 2 Sinhalese and one Tamil were chosen on the data put forward...but the Director pointed out that there was a possibility of one of those selected withdrawing his

> application...a reserve man was required. The first reserve was a Burgher. One withdrew. The Burgher reserve got in. Therefore one Sinhalese, one Tamil and one Burgher. The question was raised in the next Finance Committee that these scholarships were given on communal principles and the underlying idea was that unless there was some sort of favour shown it would not be possible for the Burghers who were so small in numbers to get equal treatment in the matter of these scholarships. It is a misunderstanding that arose among the Legislative Councillors, and you can understand how strong the feelings must be outside'.[85]

It is significant that these statements were not subsequently denied by any Legislative Councillor, who often rushed to the defence of the Finance Committee on other occasions.

The Burghers also, true to their intelligent approach to problems, brought in a refreshingly new and positive angle to thinking on communal representation; an angle which was to impress even the Commissioners. Burgher representatives, they argued, would be in a position to make a 'very valuable contribution to the stock of legislative energy' that may be brought to bear on any public question. Indeed, this contribution to the 'collective wisdom' of the community was argued to be all the more important in any experiment in democracy. The soundness of this argument could not be denied by anyone who viewed the work of the Legislative Council objectively; undoubtedly, some of the ablest councillors in the Legislature were from among these communal members; and the Burgher members, particularly, could justly claim a fair share of the 'stock of legislative energy' of the existing Council.

But perhaps a more significant fact that emerged from the official Burgher evidence was their avoidance of any direct reference to Ceylon's political future. Any reference to self-government was indirect and was couched in careful terms; Wille's warning, for instance, was very carefully worded:

> 'in future when democracy has sway there may be misunderstanding which fans a flame which may scorch some of the smaller communities. I do not want to be an alarmist, but we have got to exercise some degree of foresight'.[86]

This cautious approach to a subject on which the majority had strong views seems at once to show an awareness of the inevitable as well as prudent recognition of a tiny minority's condition in an uncertain future - an approach that seemed to be largely absent from the agitation of other minorities in Ceylon. But suchcaution did not seem to be present in the arguments of some individual

Burghers. One of them told the Commission that,

> 'we Burghers fully appreciate the benefits we have derived from British rule and so do not desire for any change in the constitution which would affect British dominion in Ceylon, or the cordial relations which have always existed between the Burghers and the Europeans, whose kindness and encouragement we shall always gratefully remember.'[87]

The Report of the Special Commissioners did not fulfil Burgher hopes of retaining communal representation. It was evident that in the case of Burghers - as with other minorities - the Commissioners were not convinced of the advisability of communal representation, at least in the long term. The doubts they expressed about communal representation were, in fact, their own doubts about the workability of democracy in the absence of good-will among the various groups involved. They observed that,

> 'it is true of all minority communities to say that any possible or reasonable extent of communal representation would still leave them at the mercy of the majority, and this is specially the case with the Burgher community. If the Legislature were anxious to oppress the Burghers in any way, it would not be prevented by the presence of two Burgher communal representatives'.

Their contention was that the real safeguard here as in other cases 'lies in the fairness and common sense of the members of the majority communities and their realization of the essential unity of interest of all sections of the people'.[88] Central to the thinking of the Commissioners - and this they tried to impress on the minorities - was, therefore, that 'fairness and commonsense' of the majority was the ultimate hope of the minorities; and that the imposition of a communal system from outside against the will of the majority would only contribute to their embitterment; and hence to a loss of goodwill. Their decision to advise the Burghers to be identified with the general electorate thus seemed to be the Commissioners' way of breaking the vicious circle that successive Governors had created by introducing communal representation.

The Commissioners, of course, tried to cushion the shock arising out of their stand by a promise that the 'ultimate safeguards for minorities in the constitution will be available for the Burghers.' Such a promise, however, would have been little comfort to a minority like the Burghers who had hardly any hopes of representation in a territorial system.

Burgher reactions to the Report were only to be expected. They were bitter

indeed. The abolition of communal representation, particularly, was a bitter pill, and, because they had enjoyed communal representation longer than any other community, the pain of loss must have been the greater. The Tamil Councillor, A. Mahadeva, aptly described Wille's anger in Council; he observed that,

> 'the Donoughmore Commission Report had been to him as a red rag to a bull and if he can seize any opportunity to have a dig at it, or those who support it, he will do so. He was a vehement opponent of universal suffrage and now that the Government asks us to inaugurate the new constitution with universal suffrage, he says, to use a local expression: "you did not support me; I will rub in some raw pepper into festering wounds"'.[89]

But the fear of the Burghers that they could be politically submerged was a genuine one. Even Governor Stanley admitted that the electoral prospects of Burghers 'must necessarily be hazardous' and that the Burghers might find themselves unable to enter the State Council otherwise than through the avenue of nomination by the Governor. The Governor was indeed sympathetic: he observed that 'Ceylon is their only home and it would be hard indeed if they and their descendants were to be denied a reasonable hope of a political career in their own country.' The Governor too appreciated the Burgher dilemma: even nomination, he opined, would be a 'palliative rather than a remedy' because they as Ceylonese 'would not wish to be differentiated from other Ceylonese members of the Council, and perhaps to be handicapped in an eventual ambition for political office, by any questioning of the representative quality of their membership.' He discovered, in the Burgher impasse, the general problem of the minorities after Donoughmore: 'I should have been very glad' he added, 'if some means of reassuring them could have been devised'[90] But he had no solution of his own.

But Burgher resiliency was already evident when the Report came to be voted on in the Legislative Council. While Wille voted against the Report, N.J.Martin, the other Burgher communal representative, voted in favour of the Report with the Sinhalese. Martin's motive seemed to be a shrewd calculation of his electoral prospects: the Colombo correspondent of The Times reasoned that Martin's

> 'vote was dictated by personal considerations and was in conflict with the mandate he received from his constituents. This member is a large estate owner in a coastal province and prefers to rely on the influence he can wield under the new constitution in a territorial electorate consisting largely

> of his own dependants and employees than again to solicit the support of his own community, whom he has disappointed. It is safe to say that the Burghers are solidly opposed to the Donoughmore Constitution.'[91]

And as if to confirm their fears, the Burghers failed to secure even a single seat in the general elections of 1931 - contested on the basis of the Donoughmore Constitution. The anomaly had to be rectified by the nomination of two Burghers to the Council by the Governor.

But the political dilemma of the Burghers may be considered as only a reflection of the wider social dilemma of the Burgher community in Ceylon. Were they to continue their identification with the Europeans, or were they to resort to an inevitable adjustment with the rest of the Ceylonese? Here again was a difficult decision: a departure from the European fold would have been difficult enough, but a process of adjustment with the Ceylonese would have been even more agonizing. But the resolution of the question was crucial as the day of self-government seemed to be fast approaching and the European power in the country seemed to be receding.

In the past, the question of integration and adjustment had hardly any urgency to the Burgher community. The British seemed firmly in the saddle and identifying with them would have been viewed as the most sensible policy. Moreover, British generosity to them - in the political field, and perhaps, in the field of employment - had carefully insulated them against the urgency of any social adjustment with the rest of the population. Again, British Colonial policy of overstressing the aspect of political representation in the Legislature - perhaps as a way of diverting attention from the all important executive powers, which the Government reserved in its own hands - had not helped the process of the integration of the communities; the various groups had consumed all their energies in political conflict and that to the detriment of social adjustment. In this context, even the Donoughmore exercise was counter-productive. It became a new cockpit of political conflict and the bitterness it generated put back the process of adjustment.

The Report, however, attempted what it regarded as the recovery of lost

ground. In recommending the abolition of communal representation and placing the communities on the general electorate, it attempted to focus the attention of the communities on the urgent need for integration.

But the immediate post-Donoughmore Commission period did not witness any positive Burgher action in the direction of integration. Over-playing their minority condition and grieving over Donoughmore 'betrayal' seemed to have taken precedence over any positive or constructive thinking. The community, which had been already shaken by a rapid succession of political reforms, seemed too shocked and dazed, at this juncture, to think in terms of reconstruction.

But then, on the other hand, it was not difficult to appreciate the apparent Burgher inaction when their enormous and complex socio-economic problems are seen in their proper perspective. The large number of obstacles that surrounded them did not seem to be the type that permitted any immediate surmounting. Their own, long-held prejudices against other Ceylonese communities was one such obstacle; the lack of sympathy for their dilemma by other communities was another; their own fears and tensions about their economic future was yet another.

The undercurrent of Burgher prejudice about other Ceylonese and their cultures is not to be denied. The Commissioners, for instance, would have been able to gather a general idea of how some Burghers felt towards their Sinhalese neighbours from the memorandum of a Burgher author; the Sinhalese were said to be

> 'a people, large sections of which are engrossed with superstition, inflated with an exaggerated idea of their pristine greatness and who have suffered themselves to be overpowered with the besetting sins of clannism and caste prejudice and always at each other's throats, with a shameful record of being the "most murderous nation" and with no spirit of unity except in name.'[92]

Such were not the views that could have been changed in a hurry.

On the other hand, resistance to any Burgher efforts at integration from within the Ceylonese communities is not to be underestimated. The caste-bound Ceylonese society had made any social integration painful and difficult. And the fact, moreover, that the Burghers were a marginal community ethnically and psychologically allied to the ruling race was not a favourable condition for integration, especially in a period of national resurgence. That such resistance to integration was not a myth was evident from a campaign of some Sinha-

lese nationalist extremists against what they called 'mishmash marriages'. One such extremist spoke of the danger of miscegenation: that the issue of such unions are 'condemned to stand aloof without a country and destitute of the sentiment of patriotism;' and such unions like the 'union of Othello and Desdemona' were bound 'to end up in tragedy'.[93] At a meeting of a handful of such campaigners, widely publicized as a "Public Meeting of Buddhists", the notorious extremist Piyadasa Sirisena demanded legislation to stop the creation of a 'community of hybrids and bastards'.[94] Moderate Ceylonese opinion roundly condemned the campaign. It was condemned as 'petty', 'racial', 'extremist' and 'religious and social lumbago'. One observer spoke of the 'rank hypocrisy of shouting against inter-racial marriages' while the caste system is tearing the nation apart and driving 'educated youth to look for brides elsewhere'.[95] Even if the campaign was that of the few, it was indicative of the obstacles in the way of integration.

But the question that created the greatest misunderstanding between the Burghers and the rest and thus delayed adjustment was the question of employment. Undoubtedly, part of the reason for the Burgher desire for the continuation of British rule was their apprehensions regarding employment opportunities in a self-governing Ceylon. Recent Sinhalese and Tamil demands to 'break down the corners of privilege'[96] - obviously a reference to Burgher predominance in certain departments like the Health Department - had only increased Burgher fears. The question, indeed, was a difficult and sensitive one. The Congress demand before the Commission that all departments should recruit on the 'basis of competition and merit irrespective of race' and not on the basis of nomination seemed reasonable enough. On the other hand, it was only natural that the Burghers recognized the agitation as one directed against them - for the few departments that continued the practise of nomination were those where they predominated. The much publicized "Leembruggen affair" that had dragged the conflict out into the open had convinced the Burghers of Sinhalese thinking on the subject.[97]

Faced by these tremendous odds, the Burgher community seemed to exhibit at

least two different moods: one was a mood of despondency, which prompted emigration as a way out of the impasse; and which, in fact, led to the loss to the country of some of its ablest men. But another, perhaps a more realistic, tendency was also in evidence: one of realisation of the changed situation and a recognition of the urgency for adjustment. The lead seemed to emerge more from the younger generation of Burgher leadership. A young Burgher intellectual spoke for the integrative element when he warned that,

> 'there is no use putting their heads in the sands and saying that no change was taking place. Changes were taking place and the only correct thing for them to do was to take part in them';

indeed, he added 'it was only right that they should associate themselves, more and more, with the people among whom they lived'; and as 'self-government was going to be the goal of Ceylon, no good would be served either to the community or to the country by their standing apart'.[98]

An encouraging response from the majority might have strengthened the forces of integration among the Burghers. But a response was not seen to be available. Indeed, the majority leadership did not seem to have even comprehended the delicacy and complexity of the Burgher dilemma sufficiently to appreciate the need for such an encouragement. The majority leadership was so preoccupied with its demands for self-government that it failed to reassure a small minority how they would fare in such a self-governing future. They were losing an opportunity to tell the Burghers that they belonged and that they, with their intelligence and their steadfastness, would make the nation richer and happier by their continued presence and their participation in the country's affairs.

NOTES

1. In 1926, there were about 262,621 Ceylon Moors, 14,723 Malays and about 1500 Afghans and Borahs; the figures based on The Ceylon Blue Book for 1926, p. K1.
2. See W.C. Smith, Modern Islam in India, for a stimulating discussion on this subject.
3. C.I., 30 June 1927.
4. C.I., 30 June 1927.
5. C.I.,7 February 1927 and 22 February 1927.
6. Figures based on The Ceylon Blue Book for 1926, p. M 5.
7. The Batticoloa Muslim Association to the D.Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol. I.
8. The Eastern Province, which contained more than one-third of the total Muslim population had only 4446 pupils on roll, in March 1926, of the total of some 17,000 Muslim pupils in the Island, see The Ceylon Blue Book for 1926, p. M 5.
9. H.M. Macan Markar to D.Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol. V; oral evidence, D.C.O.S., Vol. IV; and proceedings of the C.L.C., 14 July 1927.
10. T.B. Jayah, (Principal of Zahira College), during opening of extension to Zahira College, C.I., 30 January 1928.
11. P. Ramanathan, Riots and Martial Law in Ceylon; Sir Hugh Clifford to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 20 November 1926, C.O. 537,692.
12. H.R. Freeman to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol. III.
13. In the rebellion of 1818, the Moors remained 'staunchly loyal'. They received their reward immediately after the disturbances; by the Proclamation of 1818, all Moors of the Kandyan Provinces were excluded from the executive and judicial jurisdiction of the Kandyan chiefs and were placed directly under British officials; every Moor suffering in person or property through his adherence to the British was promised the fullest compensation, and was exhorted 'earnestly and jealously to aid and assist in putting down the present daring rebellion', see Ceylon Government Gazette, 7 March 1818; C.R. de Silva, Ceylon under the British Occupation, 1795-1833, Vol.I, pp.185-86.
14. M.T. Akbar, private evidence before the D. Commission, 6 January 1928, Nathan Papers.
15. Clifford to Secretary of State, 20 November 1926, C.O. 537,692.
16. H.M. Macan Markar to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol. V.
17. The Muslims remained virtually untouched by the Sinhalese or Tamil caste system and succeeded in maintaining an egalitarian society - in the Muslim sense, no doubt; Bryce Ryan, Caste in Modern Ceylon; The Sinhalese System in Transition,pp. 146-148; indeed, in their living and trading with more or less all caste groups without distinctions, their influence in weakening rigid caste attitudes would have been significant. An assessment of such an influence could become a revealing study.
18. M.T. Akbar, private evidence before the D.Commission, Nathan Papers.
19. T.B. Jayah to the Secretary of State, 27 March 1930, C.O. 54,900.
20. H.M. Macan Markar was the most prominent exponent of the argument; he demanded that, for the next 15-20 years, Muslims be guaranteed 5 per cent of all public service jobs, and that a 'temporary concession' of this nature would be a'great stimulus' to the educationally backward Muslims. He argued that there was nothing 'novel or extraordinary' about such a demand as a 'similar concession based on percentage of population' was granted by the Indian Government to Muslims in India; H.M. Macan Markar to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.V, oral evidence, D.C.O.S., Vol.IV, and proceedings of C.L.C., in Ceylon Hansard for 1927, p. 960. Other Ceylonese groups, of course, were scandalised by the claim, see, for instance, G.K.W. Perera, in evidence before D. Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol. I, p. 180.
21. T.B. Jayah, address before Annual General Meeting of Young Muslim League, C.I., 7 February 1927.
22. The Malays did preserve some of their customs and maintained a way of life of their own. They were, however, not entirely endogamous, occasionally intermarrying with the Moors. There was, no doubt, a tendency to blur the line

of separation; but it was not to the extent that certain Moor spokesmen painted it to be; one Memorandum to the Commission, for instance, obviously exaggerated: Moors and Malays 'Have so freely intermarried with one another and with other Muslim races that they cannot distinguish their real origin and it would be difficult to give a definition of a Malay or a Moor. Many Malays wear the fez and speak Tamil and many Moors wear the turban and speak Malay', T.K. Burah to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol. I.

23. The Malay Political Association to the D.Commission, enclosure: a report of a public meeting of Malays, 11 December 1927, in D.C.W.S., Vol.V.
24. In Chapter I: Introduction.
25. Malay Political Association to D.Commission, enclosure: report of a public meeting of Malays, 11 December 1927, in D.C.W.S., Vol. V.
26. Ibid
27. In the heat of argument, there was a tendency to overstate the institutional difference. It was true that Malays had a few mosques of their own, but they often attended 'Moor Mosques'.
28. The Kandy Malay Association to D.Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol. IV.
29. E.B. Denham, Ceylon at the Census of 1911, p. 238.
30. M.T. Akbar, private evidence before the D.Commission, Nathan Papers.
31. The Times of Ceylon, report of Malay public meeting, 24 December 1927.
32. The Kandy Malay Association to D.Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol. IV.
33. T.B. Jayah, address at public meeting of Muslims, Ceylon Morning Leader, 12 December 1927.
34. Moor Political Association, evidence to the D.Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.V.
35. Ibid.
36. Batticaloa People's Association to the D.Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.I; and evidence before Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol. III.
37. Ibid.
38. The association was led by N.H.M. Abdul Cader and H.M. Macan Markar; only a handful of Malays led by T.B.Jayah remained to support the group.
39. Report of Central Province Moors' Mass Meeting, 31 December 1927 (resolutions 1 and 2), in Nathan Papers.
40. M.J. Majid, C.I., 7 January 1928.
41. C.I., editorial, 10 January 1928.
42. Sir Matthew Nathan's notes on private meeting with Governor Stanley, entry on 16 January 1928, Diary 1, 1928, Nathan Papers.
43. Sir Matthew Nathan during the evidence of Galle Muslim Association, D.C.O.S., Vol. IV, p. 179.
44. H.M. Macan Markar, evidence before the D.Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.IV, p.164.
45. For example, see evidence of H.M. Macan Markar, D.C.O.S., VOl. IV.
46. D.C.R., pp. 93-94.
47. Conference of Muslims, 9 September 1928, resolutions, C.O. 54,892; Young Muslim League meeting on 31 October 1928, resolutions, C.O. 54,892; Chinafort Muslim Association, Beruwala, to the Secretary of State, 12 September 1928, C.O., 54,892.
48. Ibid.
49. T.B. Jayah to Secretary of State, 27 July 1930, C.O. 54,900.
50. Minutes of Jayah's meeting with Passfield (Secretary of State), 27 July 1930, C.O. 54,900.
51. Ibid.
52. H.M. Macan Markar was elected for Batticaloa South in the Eastern Province.
53. A mass meeting of Muslims, in Colombo, 20 September 1931, report and resolutions, in C.O. 54,907.
54. The Muslims of the Island to the Secretary of State, 14 October 1931,C.O.54,907
55. Graeme Thomson to Secretary of State, 14 October 1931, C.O., 54,907.
56. Eastern Province Muslims to Secretary of State, 12 Mov. 1931, C.O. 54,907.
57. W.M.R. Croise, minute, 28 November 1931, C.O. 54,907.
58. D.C.R., p. 94.
59. Throughout this study, references to the Burghers without specific indications to the contrary will be to the Eurasians in Ceylon.

60. E.B. Denham, Ceylon at the Census of 1911, p. 238.
61. The Dutch Burghers to the Earl of Crew (Secretary of State), 30,May, 1910.
62. R.G.A. (evidently the initials of R.C. Anthonisz, the Government Archivist), The Burghers of Ceylon, p.2. This authoritative document of the Dutch Burgher Union of Ceylon, presented to the Donoughmore Commission along with the Dutch Burgher Union Memorandum, was a reprint from the Journal of the Dutch Burgher Union, July, 1927.
63. Op. cit., p.5.
64. Sir Richard Ottley, Chief Justice of Ceylon, 1927-1833; a dictum often cited by the Dutch Burghers: vide op.cit., p.5.
65. Op.cit., p.7.
66. H.F. and F.A. Fernando, A Dip into the Past or Matters of Historical Interest Relating to the Portion of the Sinhalese Known as KA-U-RAWA.
67. Martin Edward Munasingha, Supplementary Memorandum submitted at the Request of the Commissioners on the Reform of the Constitution with Reference to the History of the Wahmpura Caste of the Sinhalese Race, p.2.
68. R.G.A., The Burghers of Ceylon, p.7.
69. E.B. Denham, Ceylon at the Census of 1911, pp.238-39; the quotation is from C.M. Fernando, "Music of Ceylon", Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, (Ceylon Branch), Vol. XIII, p.183.
70. P.V.J.Jayasekera, Social and Political Change in Ceylon, 1900-1919, Ph.D. Thesis, London, 1970, pp.138-142.
71. E.O. Felsinger to D.Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.III.
72. A stimulating study of the Anglo-Indians is contained in V.R. Gaikwad, The Anglo-Indians.
73. Report of the Backward Classes Commissioner in The Review, February 1957,p.2.
74. For instance, the Anglo-Indians were often observed to use the term 'nigger' for the Indian, see C.N.Weston, Anglo-Indian Revolutionaries, p.137.
75. V.R.Gaikwad, op.cit., see Chapter III: "Trends in Anglo-Indian Opinion", p.47-88.
76. Sir Emperson Tennent, Ceylon, Vol.II, p.71.
77. Much as they longed, the Burghers were not exactly welcomed among the exclusive company of the Europeans; the European clubs were barred to them as much as to the other Ceylonese. Whatever political and economic concessions granted to them were conceded as to 'natives' of Ceylon.
78. P.V.J.Jayasekera, op.cit., pp.148-153; 171-186.
79. The Jaffna Association, though inaugurated in 1906, could not be considered a strictly communal organisation, at least in its early stages, as it did not then make strictly communal demands and often spoke in unison with united elite organisations like the Ceylon National Association.
80. The Dutch Burghers to the Earl of Crewe, 30 May 1910.
81. McCallum to Earl of Crewe, 15 June, 1910.
82. S.R.Wijemanne evidence before D.Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.I, p.214.
83. S.R.Wijemanne, "Wanted: Political Workers", in The Constitutional Problems of Ceylon, (P).
84. Elected on communal electorates: G.A.H.Wille and N.J.Martin; nominated by Governor: H.A. Loos.
85. D.B.U., evidence before D.Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.I., p.88.
86. D.B.U. evidence before D.Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.I., pp.85-101.
87. E.O. Felsinger to D.Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.III.
88. D.C.R., p.95.
89. Proceedings of C.L.G., 10 July 1930. (A.Mahadeva).
90. Stanley to Secretary of State, 2 June, 1929, Cmd. 3419.
91. The Times, (London), 1 March 1930.
92. Wells, F.Janz, (author of a pamphlet called Un-British Administration of British Ceyon), to D.Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.IV.
93. C.I., 7 March 1927.
94. C.I., 7 March 1927; the leading participants at the meeting: C.Batuwanthudawe, P.T.Pandita Gunawardene and Piyadasa Sirisena (editor of Sinhala Jatiya).
95. C.I., 11 March 1927 (Fidelis A.Silva); C.I., 12 March 1927 (H. Don David);

C.I., 16 March 1927 ("V.S.", Negombo).

96. Ceylon National Congress evidence before D. Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.I.p.83.
97. Dr. J.F.E. Bridger, The Director of Medical and Sanitary Services recommended Dr. Leembruggen (a Burgher) a 'comparatively-speaking junior officer of his Department' to succeed Dr. Cooke (a Burgher), the Assistant Director of Medical and Sanitary Services, in 1927. Dr. Leembruggen was recommended over Dr. Jayatilake (a Sinhalese) the Senior Provincial Surgeon from which post Dr. Cooke had received his promotion. The events took a political turn when D.S. Senanayake, the Sinhalese Executive Councillor, threatened to resign his post in order to be able to move a motion of censure in the Legislative Council on the working of the Health Department. A.G.M. Fletcher, the Officer Administering the Government agreed with Senanayake that the 'Burghers had matters very much their own way, by reason of their preponderating numbers in the senior posts of the Department, and more particularly because of the influence wielded by Dr. Cooke'. Fletcher went further: he considered that Dr. Jayatilake had the 'better claim' on grounds of 'seniority' and'official qualifications'. Fletcher declared that 'Dr. Leembruggen had the larger share of energy' because he was the younger man, but 'Dr. Jayatilake had had a most successful career, was a man of exceptional tact and had all the requisite qualifications'. W.G. Ormsby-Gore, the Under Secretary of State, finally decided that the appointment should go to Dr. Jayatilake. (A.G.M. Fletcher to L.S. Amery, Secretary of State, 2 August 1927, C.O. 54,886; Ormsby-Gore to Fletcher, 1 September, 1927, C.O. 54,886.)
98. Dr. H.W. Leembruggen, address at the D.B.U. on "The Colour Problem and the World Today", C.I., 5 March 1928.

CHAPTER V. THE EUROPEANS

The European community in Ceylon was anything but homogeneous. It was, of course, predominantly British. Within the community there were a number of distinguishable groups, divided mainly on social and economic grounds. There were the officials of Government - those who filled the civil and other public services; since the European officials mainly occupied the middle and upper range of the services and generally worked and moved together, they could be considered as belonging to one group. The mercantile community was mainly concentrated in Colombo and handled banking, insurance, shipping, mercantile agencies and so forth; even this group was divided on the social level: those on the top rung of the commercial world, the executive type, who maintained their own exclusive social clubs and their social life; and those others like the store-keepers and supervisors who were lower down the scale. There were the planters, who lived a life of their own in the planting districts. And the artisan type - the skilled workers in public and other works - who were a class by themselves. Though the official and artisan groups had greater contact with the Ceylonese in their duties than the other groups, all these European groups were noted for their exclusion of Ceylonese from their social life. Besides these, however, there was a minority of Europeans - a fair mixture of European nationalities - who were involved in missionary, educational and nursing work; these tended to move more freely with the Ceylonese.

In this study we consider the European community as a minority; and this for at least two important reasons: numerically they were a tiny minority, with some 10,000 (about 0.2 per cent of the population) in 1926; and by the period under review they had, even in psychological terms, come to accept a minority position. This latter reason is relevant; in the previous decade or so, the vast political, social and economic changes in the Island had

tended radically to transform the position of the Europeans generally; from the 'special position' of the ruling race they had, not least in their own eyes, become a nervous minority vis-a-vis the Ceylonese in general and the Sinhalese majority in particular.

The minority position of the Europeans seemed even more striking when one considered the polarisation of attitudes and feelings between them and the rest of the population. This was, for instance, evident in the attitude of the Ceylonese elite, who, although they constantly disagreed among themselves, revealed remarkable agreement in their feelings towards the Europeans; Clifford bitterly remarked that the one thing that brought the Ceylonese politicians together was their common opposition to European domination. A further aspect of this Ceylonese elite attitude was their general unwillingness to distinguish between the various - official,mercantile, planting and artisan - groups of Europeans in their judgments, often lumping them together in one heap. The European groups, on the other hand, whatever the differences between them, revealed a similar tendency to consider themselves as a group as against the rest, which they usually rolled into one group, labelled the "natives". P.R. Smythe, who served as a judge in Ceylon during the period under review, writing of this European tendency observed that the Europeans are 'encouraged to assume that the meanest white man, the private soldier and the engine driver, ranks above the native; he becomes a gentleman when he steps ashore'.[1] A civil servant of the period, T.Reid, who analysed the polarisation discovered the basic reason to be 'colour', which was said to be the 'chief question in public life in Ceylon'; all the Ceylonese, he argued 'considered themselves as a coloured nation vis-a-vis their white rulers'; but Reid added that there was 'little cohesion even between the politically-minded save the common objection to white domination - a protoplasm of patriotism that would disappear if self-government were installed'.[2] Whatever the reason, polarisation was undeniable, and for this very reason this study of Europeans is one place where we could safely refer to "European attitudes" and "Ceylonese attitudes".

The polarisation was also reflected in the social, economic and political organisations of the two groups. The European business community organised itself into the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce as early as 1839 in order to safeguard its interests.[3] Almost all the European firms in the Island became members of the Chamber. There were, of course, allegations that the Chamber discouraged Ceylonese applications for membership; and these allegations seemed justified by the fact that in 1927, after 88 years in existence, it had only some 6 Ceylonese members out of a total membership of 110.[4] The European planting community on their side organised the Planters' Association of Ceylon in 1854. This remained an exclusively European association up to our period. In other words, these two associations remained the citadels of European entrepreneurs and capitalists in Ceylon. The Ceylonese business and planting interest - made up mainly of coconut growers and mill owners of the Low-country - on the other hand, organised themselves, in 1908, into the Low-country Products Association of Ceylon; presumably, the feeling of being excluded from the European-dominated associations and the need to organise themselves into a pressure group to agitate for their interests and to counter-balance the power and influence of the European associations, prompted the founding of the association. The result of course was that the country's leading economic organisations were labelled either European or Ceylonese.

A similar development could be observed in the organisation of political associations: when the Ceylonese elite were seeking organisational unity to agitate for constitutional reforms in the aftermath of the Riots of 1915, the Europeans, with the exception of the officials and missionaries, assembled under their own political organisations, the European Association of Ceylon, in 1918. Indeed, when a united Ceylonese elite formed the Ceylon National Congress, in 1919, only the Europeans were to stand aloof from it. Though it is true that, after the Congress split of 1921, the various Ceylonese groups were to form their own political assocations, the initial division between the Europeans and the united Ceylonese elites was indicative of the political gulf between them.[5]

Even the Press in Ceylon revealed this division. The national English dailies like the Ceylon Daily News, the Ceylon Independent and the Ceylon Morning Leader were Ceylonese-owned and -edited. The influential Times of Ceylon, on the other hand, was owned and edited by Europeans. But it is significant that while the Ceylonese-owned dailies reflected a variety of viewpoints - The Ceylon Independent alone, for instance, becoming violently anti-Congress after 1927 - they achieved remarkable rapport for their views of the Europeans. The Times of Ceylon, on the other hand, was consistently a firm upholder of European values and policies and a critic of the Ceylonese elite, and particularly of the Sinhalese elite.

The polarisation described above was at least indicative of strained feelings between the Europeans and the Ceylonese elite. And this in turn raises the question of reasons.

Ceylonese as well as European observers agreed that the real deterioration of relations began in the aftermath of the Riots of 1915.[6] Doubtless it was primarily Ceylonese disenchantment with the Administration because of what Clifford described as 'the unfortunate events attending the riots of 1915 and the methods adopted for their repression', which,he added,

> 'imported into the relations between the Government and the indigenous population an element of bitterness which, until then, had been absent; and this had the marked effect in strengthening the belief that the interests of the Government and those of the governed were diametrically opposed the one to the other, and that any person claiming to rank as a patriot must necessarily be a consistent opponent of the Administration.'[7]

But because of the participation of many civilian Europeans - mainly planters - in the repression of the Riots and the general tendency - already observed - of the Ceylonese to identify the Administration with the European community, the feelings were bound to spread against the whole European community.

The political developments of the twenties provided the climate for the growth of tensions between the two groups. The Manning Reforms of 1924, especially the grant of a non-official majority in the Legislature, provided the Ceylonese with an inside-view of the workings of the Government and the bureaucracy, and with it a licence to criticise. The Finance Committee of

the Legislative Council, in which all the non-officials were members, was actually used as a forum to criticise the Government and the officials. Not unnaturally, the officials, too, reacted to this attitude of criticism. On the whole, the Reforms generated in the officials a sense of deep resentment at the loss of power and in the European economic interests a suspicion of Ceylonese elite intentions.

However, the tensions, resentments, fears and suspicions - on both sides - had only been simmering in the background. There was no crisis to help boil them over and no opportunity for their proper assessment, The announcement of the Donoughmore Commission, in early 1927, provided the crisis-situation and the opportunity. The over dramatisation of the Commission's role - for which as we have observed, Clifford was mainly responsible - only heightened the sense of crisis. The debate that was triggered off by the announcement and which continued during the sessions, revealed the extent of the deterioration of relations. The European argument, articulated mainly by the European Association and the Planters' Association, attempted to demonstrate the deep anti-European bias of the Ceylonese elite - evidently to discourage further reforms and even, if possible, to convince the Commission of the desirability of curbing the powers already granted to the Ceylonese. The Ceylonese elite, and mainly the Sinhalese elite, were determined to deny such bias fearing, perhaps, that the Commission would be deterred from further reforms if it feared that the European interests in Ceylon were in danger. The Ceylonese elite groups were, however, careful to distinguish between racial bias and a change of attitude. These elite spokesmen did not deny a certain change of attitude towards the European and his interests; a change which, they argued, was 'forced' on them by the changed attitudes of the Europeans towards the Ceylonese and their aspirations.

Indeed, these two views -'the anti-European bias' of the Ceylonese and the 'insensitivity' of the Europeans to 'Ceylonese aspirations' - summed up the state of misunderstanding between the two groups. An analysis of the social,

economic and political factors which obviously lurked behind this misunderstanding is indispensable to the understanding of the European minority of the period in Ceylon.

First, the social factors. These seem to revolve round the Europeans' alleged 'social exclusivism' and 'racial arrogance'. The social behaviour of the European community in general, in fact, left room for allegations of social exclusivism; the European clubs, without exception, rigidly excluded the Ceylonese. Though this might have been explainable in the context of a group far away from home wishing to associate socially with their group alone, the attitude did indeed generate deep resentment among the Ceylonese elite. But it does not seem entirely accurate to describe, as the Ceylonese elite often did, this attitude as racial arrogance: because, most of these clubs were conducted on a class level and even excluded other Europeans; Smythe, for instance, observed that the Garden Club 'though not offering a definition of a gentleman, in practice it claimed to say who is or is not likely to prove a gentleman. Traders and engineers (mechanical, not civil) and newspaper managers, not journalists, are excluded'; and the Colombo Club, he noted, was 'even more fastidious, and rejected Sir Thomas Lipton when he paid a visit to his estates in Ceylon'.[8] W.T. Stace, who served as a civil servant during this period, wrote of the dilemma of a European constable in Galle: 'he was not allowed to join the clubs' and he was unable to associate with the Ceylonese because 'he would have been told that he was letting down the dignity of the white man'; and Stace himself, who befriended him was 'scolded' by his colleagues and was asked to 'break off the acquaintance'.[9] Therefore, though we may not exclude racial prejudice altogether, the social exclusiveness of the European could also be explained as some form of class prejudice which they developed in a Colonial context, or as imperial sentiment.

In truth, however, social exclusiveness was not the only reason for allegations of racial arrogance levelled against the Europeans. The tendency of the European planter, in particular, to look down on Ceylonese institutions like mahajana sabhas, and their constant use of such 'seemingly innocuous

phrases' as the 'Europeans' duty to civilisation', was interpreted as manifestations of a 'superiority complex'.[10] Indeed, such attitudes were not absent among some members of the European community in Ceylon. For instance, an article appearing in the Quarterly Bulletin of the European Association of Ceylon, which was said to demonstrate this arrogance, was widely quoted; the article's contention was that 'in the process of evolution the Western world had produced a dominant sub-species' and that this 'sub-species had developed the power and the ability to act and think originally'; an ability which, the article argued, the Easterners did not have. The writer of the article, however, did not despair, 'as we are pledged, because we are what we are, to do our best for the common weal during our short span of life'.[11]

Privately, even the Governors of the period agreed that the average European did not make things easy for the Government's good relations with the 'natives'. Speaking of the planters, Clifford admitted that even a 'number of their leading representatives appear, on occasion, to be completely oblivious of the changes in circumstances and in values which the last two decades have witnessed in the East'. The fact is, the Governor added, that the 'conviction of racial superiority inspires the rank and file of the planters with a confidence in their ability to get their own way, in spite of any action or intrigues on the part of Asiatics' and 'this misplaced assurance of security blinds them to the actualities of the situation with which today the Europeans in the East are confronted'. His conclusion was that the planters as a community were living 'in a fools' paradise, and they are not very helpful to the Colonial Government'.[12]

Clifford's observations on the European business community were no less harsh: there was no doubt, he argued, 'considerable rapprochement' between the business communities of Europeans and Ceylonese; but even then the bulk of the business community was, during the day 'fully occupied by their business and their afternoons and evenings are spent in social intercourse from which, for the most part, Ceylonese are rigidly excluded'. Clifford

was even less impressed by the attitudes of the Europeans of the 'superior artisan class': it was to be feared, Clifford lamented, that they 'by their general attitude and behaviour towards the Ceylonese do little to sweeten the relations between the two races'.

Clifford's picture of the Government official was more favourable; they were more 'intimate' with the Ceylonese and often accepted the 'rather insistent assumption of equality by Ceylonese' with 'courtesy and good temper'. There was, however, among some of the 'more senior Civil Servants and Heads of Departments' a 'smouldering sense of resentment' at the changed conditions in which they found themselves. But the Governor was sympathetic: the Government Agent, for instance, brought up in the old school, so the Governor argued, had come to believe that the holder of that great office was a 'generally benevolent, paternal and rather arbitrary Providence to the people of his Province'.[13]

Even Governor Stanley was worried over the situation. He noted that, whenever the Government attempted to accommodate Ceylonese opinion or when the Government found itself 'constrained to signify disagreement with some practice or act or decision of an officer', the official regarded himself as 'sacrificed to political pressure' and deprived of the support which was his 'due'. The result? 'He grouses, sighs for the good old days and blames the Colonial Secretary'. Stanley guessed the reason: 'all this', he opined, was because of a 'subconscious racial feeling'.[14]

There was, of course, another side to this social picture. There was, for instance, the alleged racial attitude of the Ceylonese which led to accusations of anti-European bias. Clifford, along with the spokesmen of the European and Planters' Associations, firmly believed that the Ceylonese elite were fundamentally racial in their attitudes to the Europeans and their affairs; indeed, he insisted that the Ceylonese elite were incapable of approaching any problem 'in a spirit of detachment'; even their agitation for reform was said to be 'in its essence, racial rather than political'. Clifford, however, toned down this harsh judgment when he added that racial

animosity was not endemic in Ceylon: 'in no way innate or instinctive' because the Ceylonese were 'naturally a friendly and courteous and very tolerant people'; and indeed, 'so little infected by the really active race-hatred which prominent agitators have been at such pains to kindle in a country so near to Ceylon as British India'[15] When one considers the tone of the anti-European statements of some Ceylonese elite, it seems indeed difficult to rule out the racial explanation. But Clifford and other Europeans perhaps overstated it to the neglect of other relevant political and economic factors that went into the growth of feeling against the Europeans.

After this short survey of the social climate in which tensions grew, we can now enquire into a second set of factors - the economic. Here the main source of bitterness was the problem of land. Indeed, nothing seemed to generate as much bitterness and ill-feeling against the European as this issue. Though logically it would have been a case against the planting interest, the Ceylonese elite bitterness extended to all European interest - planting, commercial and even the executive - because in their minds all Europeans were part and parcel of the capitalist system which in Ceylon thrived mainly on land development. The period witnessed the Ceylonese elites' preoccupation with the land question. They argued that the whole history of planting was based on injustice. Government legislation on 'waste land', for instance, was seriously questioned.[16] The more extreme opinion tended to present the legislation as 'instruments of robbery' and the Government as the 'highway robber'. In other words, their contention was that the Government had acted in bad faith to acquire land and to pass it on to the capitalist interest.[17] To others the legislation was based on a 'fundamental misconception': in traditional times, it was argued, the people were the owners of the land and they had merely 'consented' to give a tenth of its produce to the King; this system was said to be entirely at variance with the feudal Norman conception that the King was the lord paramount of the soil. The Government, in good faith no doubt, had deprived the village community of its domains which were necessarily uncultivated reserves for community use and village expansion.[18]

However, there was unanimity of opinion as to the consequences of legislation: that the villages were 'squeezed into corners' as communal lands and chena lands[19] were taken away as waste land and sold to the plantation interest; that many villagers had sold their holdings through fear of being ousted from their 'ancestral land' owing to the absence of requisite documentary evidence; and that there was a terrible 'land hunger' for an expanding population. There were, no doubt, those who held still milder views regarding the land policy. Their view was that it was no question of expropriation by the Government but of the improvidence of the villager - that the villager expropriated himself. But even this class of opinion blamed the Government for presiding over this situation; it is only now, they complained, 'after a century of British rule that a Commission is to be set up' to investigate the land question and that 'at the instance of the unofficial members of the Legislative Council'.[20]

The Ceylonese elite were careful to assert that their campaign over land was out of no animus against the European interests as such; but an attempt to remedy a grievance arising out of the slow strangulation of the traditional 'peasant industry', as a consequence of the expansion of plantations in their midst. Their case was that in the fertile wet zone, where most peasants lived, the alienation of land for plantations had long since not merely reached but passed the 'saturation point'.

Whatever their denials, there seems little doubt about the anti-European motives in the elite campaign on land. Their continual probing of the history of the land problem and their bitterness against the planting industry as a whole could not be explained without positing such a motive. True, it was a feeling against all planting interests -European and Ceylonese alike - but the fact that the planting industry was mainly European-dominated and that every European was considered an actual or potential capitalist makes this explanation reasonable; how, for instance, could one miss the bitterness against the European in the Kandyan lament,

> 'all Kandyan land is Crown, the only valid title is British and that land is held in trust for a "public" which consists of all peoples of the earth except the Kandyans; and that the trust is administered by British officials with the widest discretionary powers of disposal and that it is proof against prescription in respect of possession by Kandyans against Crown ownership'.[21]

The Ceylonese - mainly the Sinhalese - elite, who conducted this campaign were no doubt mainly concerned about the peasants. But this motive does not seem to be unmixed with some of their own personal ones. One significant fact that emerged in the debate was that a number of campaigners were themselves anxious to take to the plantation industry; but were prevented from doing so because of the 'conditions': their complaints that the European-owned banks were unwilling to lend to Ceylonese and their agitation for a State Mortgage Bank revealed their frustration.[22] Then, on the other hand, one could find a motive in the feelings of resentment and bitterness of the Kandyan elite - traditional and new alike - at the embargo placed on their prestige within the huge estate enclaves within their provinces.

The Governors of the period did think that the elite had reason for bitterness. Manning spoke in Council of the 'extremely difficult problem' that arose out of the selling of lands 'without any consideration for the wants of the villagers'.[23] Clifford's opposition to further sale of lands to the plantation interest was well known to the Ceylonese. But the Ceylonese of the period were perhaps unaware of the Governor's strong feelings on the subject. Actually, Clifford betook himself to some serious soul-searching on the whole question of land. One of his long, well-argued documents on the subject shook the Colonial Office so much that W.G. Ormsby-Gore, the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, ordered that it be printed as a Colonial Office confidential print and despatched forthwith to all Colonial Governors, and 'very officially'.[24] Subsequently, Clifford was invited to read a paper on the subject before the Colonial Governors at the Colonial Office Conference in 1927.[25]

Clifford drew attention to the urgency of the problem: he observed that,

> 'having regard to the fact this expansion [of plantation industry] has mainly taken place in the fertile wet zone - which is the only part of

> the Island that is suitable for occupation... - it is clear that the further indefinite growth of large tea, rubber and coconut estates cannot continue to be promoted and encouraged unless the Government of Ceylon is prepared to face the prospect of...a congested population in a tropical, agricultural country, with no suitable land available for its use'.

The Governor drew a dark picture of the possible consequences of such congestion:

> 'vast numbers of Sinhalese peasants would be rendered landless in their own native country - as huge areas were owned and cultivated by landowners the bulk of whom are of alien origin - who have against the Colonial Government, which had taken no measures to guard against this contingency, a legitimate grievance of the first magnitude. I suggest that no Colonial Government can contemplate the possibility of such a situation arising with eqanimity'.[26]

Whatever his prejudices against the educated elites, here is one argument in favour of Clifford's - and, for that matter, of the greater majority of officials' - deep concern for the welfare of the peasant.

The issue of land was the major, but one, aspect of the larger economic grievance against the Europeans. The ill-feeling extended to the whole new economic system. The elite complained of a 'tragic conflict of interests' between capital and the peasant industry. A Ceylonese writer described the conflict: it was not one between capital and labour nor one between employer and employee but between

> 'a vast multitude in rural districts, the "masses" who wish to remain independent of labour for hire, in the possession of lands which, rightly or wrongly, they claim to be theirs by the "sacred right of native inheritance" and the "classes" who grudge that independence and covet both their persons for service, and their property for commercial exploitation.'[27]

It was thus essentially a conflict between a traditional system of peasant proprietorship - cultivation of food crops in their own land - and a capitalist system based on large scale production of commercial crops in vast estates. The two interests, though not necessarily opposed to each other, were said to be in conflict as they were operating in the same area - the fertile wet zone of Ceylon. Here in this theatre of conflict, the capitalist with his superior economic and political power - and allegedly supported by the Government - was said to be in a 'scramble' for more land around villages, while the poor peasant was in danger of being 'squeezed out of existence'. The capitalist,

these critics discovered, desired to 'develop' the wet zone and believed that the land there was far 'too valuable and precious' to be wasted on 'uneconomic' peasant cultivation; and the peasant, on the other hand, only wanted to be left alone with his plot of land.[28]

The planting interest indeed argued that the question of food production was irrelevant; what was relevant being 'making the best economic use of the land'. T.L. Villiers, the respected leader of the planters, declared that he for one had never 'been convinced by any arguments' he had heard in favour of food production in Ceylon; his view was clear:

> 'if the land could produce other commodities and thereby enable members of that community to purchase food rather than first grow a few bushels of paddy for their own consumption',

then, he argued, they should 'do their best to get the very best out of the land'.[29]

Whatever the economic validity of the argument, it was not one calculated to convince an agricultural people, who had only recently - in 1919 - suffered a severe food crisis while the Government looked on helplessly. The argument did not even seem to convince some serious economists; Dr. P.J. Thomas, Professor of Economics at University College, Colombo, warned that,

> 'a landless peasantry is the greatest danger facing the country.... Happy is the land where every man has his "four acres and a cow"... dependence on others for food is a dangerous policy...especially to a country that does not have its own mercantile marine...let us have our own food'.[30]

Even disturbed European voices were heard against the economic thinking of the capitalists. Comte de Mauny's words were more than a warning; they were a serious indictment of the capitalist interest as well as a criticism of Government policy; Ceylon, he argued,

> 'is eminently an agricultural country, the psychology of the race, the needs of the people are based on land. There can never be an assured and lasting prosperity until Ceylon is self-supporting as far as food is concerned. Yet we have to import yearly 85 million rupees of rice and 15 million of secondary food stuffs, all of which with systematic efficiency and time could be grown in Ceylon'.

While he described this state of affairs as 'unpardonable', he drew attention

to the weightage given to the capitalist interest:

> 'researches for rubber and tea, though exceedingly backward in Ceylon compared to the Dutch Indies, are nevertheless far more advanced than those of rice and paddy growing which are equally, if not more important, to us'.

'Ruin will be ours', Mauny warned, 'if we do not turn towards the land energies of a population'.[31]

The Ceylonese critics saw even darker designs in the capitalist economic thinking of the Europeans. It was said to go beyond the mere discouragement of the peasant industry; it was claimed to be an active and deliberate design to 'wean' the peasant from his 'native habit' of agriculture and transform him into a wage-earning labourer. The policy of elimination of the peasant as a producer on his own account was said to be vigorously pursued for, at least two reasons: first, that the land occupied by the peasant proprietor may be available for estates, and second, that the peasant 'may be secured for estate labour'. In short, the capitalist planter,

> 'coveted the holdings of peasant proprietors, resented the independence which ownership of land gave them, and furiously raged because they could not be got to work on estates as coolies'.

It was, they alleged, a dark 'conspiracy' to transform this 'time honoured land of freedom' into a land of 'capitalists and coolies'.[32]

Clifford, who understood the deeper implications of capitalist economic thinking, was, perhaps, the greatest critic in Ceylon of the European system. He saw a hopelessness, and even a sense of injustice, in the system. He thought it axiomatic that the agricultural peasantry of a tropical country would 'never willingly consent to work for a wage on European-owned and managed estates, if the alternative be open to them of making an adequate living by the cultivation of their land'. He adduced examples to prove his thesis: in the West Indies and British Guiana the result of the emancipation of slaves was the 'wholesale desertion' of European-owned plantations by Negro labourers; they took to small plots of land. In Trinidad and Tobago coolies went back to the land at the first opportunity. The Governor probed the psychology of the tropical peasant: there was an 'almost universal preference' for their own work; their 'instincts, their traditions and their

inclinations all combined to make them regard work for a wage as a pis aller; their ambition was to own their own land and till it on their own account.'[33]

On the whole, Clifford's analysis was more than a mere criticism of the state of affairs. In the course of his analysis, he had virtually admitted the failure of the system, had pointed out the unwisdom of the continuation of the policy and had suggested a change of course: he observed that,

> 'it seems to me, that European agriculture and similar ventures, which are wholly or mainly dependent for their labour force upon a land-owning peasantry...rest upon a wholly unsound, because artificial, economic basis, and at the same time are inimical to the true interests of the indigenous population'.

He pointed the way for future policy; and he declared that,

> 'the land policy of Governments of the tropical colonies and protectorates should aim, primarily, mainly and eventually at the development of the agricultural resources of these countries through the agency of their indigenous inhabitants...it is in the best interests of the Colony to maintain a landed peasantry'.[34]

There were even far more serious arguments against the new economy. There was a school of thought - and a vocal one at that - that taught that the tea and rubber industries were of parasitic growth, which were 'fattening upon the Island's life-blood'; and that they had worked no appreciable benefit to the indigenous population. The argument ran: the estates owed their existence to a systematic series of acts of expropriation and spoliation; the industries themselves belonged to, and were maintained for the benfit of, foreigners; they were worked by foreigners; and they carried away with them all the wealth deriving leaving nothing behind;[35] Count de Mauny, who supported this 'drain theory', commented,

> 'I feel that Ceylon has been far too much exploited on self-interest lines with far too little interest in the development of the country itself for the sake of its people....Ceylon cannot afford to be made a sieve of, retaining only the pebbles, while the enriching soil goes through and leaves the country'.[36]

These critics, moreover, doubted what they called the 'boasted' or 'vaunted' prosperity of the Island. It was not said to be reflected in the lives of the people. The statistics they adduced were indeed worrying.[37] The Ceylon Independent commented:

> 'the poorer classes live under appalling conditions being badly housed and ill-fed and paradoxical though it may appear, the spectre of poverty haunts a land overflowing with surplus revenue'.[38]

The deep pessimism, and perhaps the exaggerations, of the argument could not have been - indeed were not - missed by those who examined the issues critically. It was, for instance, admitted all round that educational, medical and other welfare services - though limited in scope - would have been impossible without the revenue that European enterprises provided. Even if Clifford's contention - he often resorted to defending the new economy in public - that the 'prosperity of the country-folk is visibly proportionate to their proximity to tea and rubber plantations' was an obvious over-statement,[39] there was no doubt that contract work for buildings, clearing work in estates and transportation had provided employment to large numbers of Ceylonese. On a smaller scale too the immigrant labour population provided an outlet for village produce like vegetables and so forth.

On closer examination, however, Ceylonese elite opinion was seen to exhibit a deep ambivalence. Their real quarrel did not seem to be with the new economy as such but with the way it operated in Ceylon. Doubtless, a thin layer of extreme nationalist and revivalist opinion, perhaps sincerely, desired the replacement of the new by the old traditional natural economy. But the general elite thinking was more pragmatic. They had come to acquiesce in the new, and indeed the social upheaval it had helped to bring about, as one that had come, and come to stay. Their grievance seemed to arise out of a deep frustration - their inability to participate in the new order of things. The Ceylon Independent, an organ of the new elite summed up these views: the newspaper observed that,

> 'no serious dispute exists as to the present position of the industry in the economic life of the Island. We go further...directly as well as indirectly the general public stands to benefit by the prosperous condition of the industry...the grievance is that if a different policy had been pursued by the Government...the benefits would be far greater... the present policy is the result of the Government's tenderness for the British capitalist'.[40]

In fact, there was even no lack of admiration for the British initiative, but it was an admiration not unmixed with frustration;

'every thinking person has nothing but admiration for the manner in which the pioneers of the early planting days turned the jungle into smiling plantations...the regret is that the permanent population had little share in the process of development set in motion by the planters'.[41]

The Ceylonese elite mood could have been explained in mainly economic terms. But such was not to be the general European interpretation. It was thought to be another expression of the quality of envy of the Ceylonese character. Whatever his private thoughts on the economic problems of the country, Clifford was only being true to himself when he scoured among elite attitudes for motives; Clifford observed that

'after vanity, envy is probably the most salient vice of the Sinhalese character; and this is also the marked characteristic of the Tamils ....To the envious Ceylonese politician they (estates) stand as a perpetual symbol of the ascendancy of the British in Ceylon and, as such, are regarded by him as an eyesore'.[42]

Besides the social and economic reasons enumerated above, there were also the political ones that were to plague the relationship between the Europeans and the Ceylonese elite. The Ceylonese elite believed that the average European was opposed to their aspirations. And here the European officials and non-officials in the Legislative Council, Heads of Government Departments and the Government Agents were said to be the greatest offenders. The combination of these European groups were, the elite insisted, prejudiced against 'beneficial measures' to the people proposed by Ceylonese Councillors. The general tendency indeed of the European non-officials to vote in unison with the Government (officials) on most issues was greatly responsible for a polarisation within the Council. Here was perhaps the reason for the tendency of the Ceylonese members to consider themselves in permanent opposition to the Government. Whatever their economics, the Ceylonese non-official projects had, at least, the merit of being directed to typically Ceylonese areas of development. Any opposition to them could easily have been, and indeed was, construed as a lack of sensitivity to Ceylonese needs.

Besides the alleged European bias against a peasant proprietary system

and food production - which we discussed above - there were other areas of misunderstanding. Such Ceylonese-projected issues as a road scheme for non-planting areas, the State Mortgage Bank for Ceylonese small-holders and petty traders, and irrigation schemes for village farmers, where European opposition was obvious, created a great deal of friction and unpleasantness between the European and the Ceylonese Councillors. The Ceylonese elite-oriented Press, which provided wide publicity to this opposition of Europeans, helped to spread the ill-feeling in the country. The European opposition to some issues could have been explained away as genuine attempts to prevent economically unsound projects. But others could not be so explained. Indeed, opposition in some cases could be seen as motivated by ulterior reasons. The opposition, indeed the vehement opposition, to the State Mortgage Bank, for instance, could have been interpreted as European ill-will to the Ceylonese investor. But the Ceylonese politicians who blamed the Europeans were not free from blame either. At least after 1924, when they possessed the 'power of the purse' in the Finance Committee, the Ceylonese were seen to be opposed to a number of issues where the Europeans were involved.[43]

The Ceylonese elite did have a genuine criticism when they accused the Europeans of not participating in matters affecting the general well-being of the country. Even more moderate Ceylonese politicians like Sir James Peiris complained that Europeans lead 'rather selfish lives' and 'do not take sufficient interest in the people around them'.[44] D.S. Senanayake observed that the Europeans were a 'busy lot' who had come to 'make money and get the best out of Ceylon' and that they were satisfied 'as long as their interests were safe'.[45]

Clifford agreed with the Ceylonese elite in this matter. The bulk of the European community, he observed,

> 'continues,as of old, to lead its own life as nearly as possible as though no Asiatic community existed in its neighbourhood. The vast majority of them take not the faintest interest in local politics; never look at a Ceylonese-owned newspaper; and are completely apathetic as to the trend of public events....Some of the more

> thoughtful among them have established a European Association, the object of which is to safeguard, as far as possible, the interests of their community'.[46]

But while the lack of interest in local affairs was said to be excusable, the alleged interference of the Europeans, particularly of the European and Planters' Associations, in the political development of the Ceylonese and their open opposition to it was argued to be intolerable. These allegations of interference and opposition came to be made because of the political behaviour of the European associations during this period. Prior to the period under review, in fact, the Europeans generally had been politically inactive; they had come to be often described as 'politically' the 'most backward community in the Island';[47] and with a great deal of justification too.[48] In the period immediately prior to the arrival of the Donoughmore Commission, however, the country witnessed a sudden burst of European political activity. For instance, the European Association, led mainly by the planting and business communities, conducted monthly meetings to prepare the 'strategy' for the Commission.[49] Ceylonese elite interpretation of this intensified political activity was to be expected: it was thought to be prompted by fears of further political concessions to the Ceylonese; and a last minute preparation of a strong case against reforms and self-government for the Ceylonese. In fact, the statements of some leading Europeans supported this interpretation. A speaker at a meeting of the European Association, for instance, provided a reason why they should fight hard to keep Ceylon under Britain, for British interests, in perpetuity - and without any qualms of conscience too; the British position in Ceylon, he asserted

> 'was secured by right of conquest and not conquest over the Sinhalese but over our friends the Dutch...on the other hand, the Sinhalese had come to this country from India and their claims to position rested solely on right of conquest..the British claim...therefore rested on a higher moral plane than those of the Sinhalese themselves'.[50]

When the Commission arrived, the three leading associations - the Planters' Association, the Chamber of Commerce and the European Association - presented

their positions in public session. A number of individual Europeans also led evidence in public session. A few European officials, however, met the Commission in private. But what emerges in the analysis of European evidence was the near-unanimity of their positions with regard to major issues. This of course was not surprising in the case of the planting and commercial groups, since their interests were connected; but significantly, the officials in camera revealed a remarkable rapport with their compatriots. For this reason therefore we could with justification speak of a European case before the Commission with reference to major issues.

All the groups and individuals were, for instance, agreed on the anti-European tendencies of the Ceylonese elite and the main reason for it - land. Their contention was that there was plentiful 'waste land' which the Ceylonese did not need; but the Ceylonese leaders were said to be determined to put 'a spoke in the wheel' of those who wanted the land for development - thus resorting to a deliberate dog-in-the-manger policy to 'prejudice European interests'.[51] They even probed the motives of the politicians: the whole question was a 'trumped up affair' and used as an instrument for the promotion of discontent, and for the excitement of racial animosity.[52] This European attempt to base the land question on underlying racial feeling is very revealing: before the arrival of the Commission the Administration had begun to rethink its land policy, under pressure from Ceylonese politicians; in fact, the Government Agents were instructed to suspend the sale of lands in populated areas and to give due regard to village needs in the consideration of planters' applications for Crown land in outlying areas; the Ceylonese opposition to and, particularly, the withdrawal of the Administration's support for acquiring land for further expansion had left the planters very bitter. It was in this context that they viewed the Commission as a court of last appeal. And hence the argument based on anti-European bias, the only one left for them.

The Commissioners - at least Dr. Shiels - did not seem to be convinced: Shiels questioned the European Association,

Shiels: Is it not fair to say that a person might without any anti-European bias come to the conclusion that saturation point has been reached in respect of allocation of land to estates, and that further allocation would be a danger to villages or to the potential population? That is quite a reasonable proposition?
Answer: No, I do not think so; there is any amount of land.
Shiels: I agree it is controversial, but a person may hold that view without having an anti-European bias. Has there been any discrimination against Europeans, in favour of other sections of the community?
Answer: I do not think so.
Shiels: Well, I would hesitate to accept that as a good argument in favour of the existence of anti-European bias. I think you will agree that it is very important for the public men of this Island to see that the future needs of the Island are met.[53]

And indeed, on another occasion, while speaking of this anti-European bias a Commissioner did not seem at all surprised, because, he noted, 'there is very little evidence of much interest being taken by the European community in local affairs or much assistance being given'.[54]

Another area where the Europeans agreed was the constitutional development of the country: that the grant of a non-official majority in 1924 was 'unwise and unsatisfactory'; indeed, a 'fatal mistake'; that the advance towards self-government had been 'too rapid' and, hence, should be 'halted before it is too late'. Self-government, they argued, was 'out of the question'. Although they had no clear-cut proposals for the future, they were agreed on the lines on which the Commission should proceed: in the 'ultimate form of Government', they declared, 'there should remain the ultimate control and check' in the hands of the 'Secretary of State for the Colonies at home'; and the Commission's function was to make 'this position very clear'.[55]

They had a variety of reasons for this stand. One was, of course, the oft-repeated European argument based on the 'utter absence of homogeneity' in Ceylonese society and the real threat of 'Sinhalese domination of minorities'.[56] This argument, repeated at every stage in the history of reforms, as observed by Ceylonese observers, had begun to lose its

vitality and even its credibility - especially, as the Europeans were not seen to be doing anything about the divisions in society they complained about, except using them as an argument to oppose reforms. Another line of argument was that the cry for further reforms and self-government was only the 'politician's cry' and not a cry from the country; in other words, that it was a conspiracy of a 'small clique' that would inevitably lead to an 'oligarchical rule'.[57] This of course was well-founded, though the elite were quick to taunt the Europeans for the argument saying that the Europeans were woefully ignorant of the country's mood as they were not even able to understand the 'cry' as it was uttered mainly in the vernacular through the mahajana sabhas and vernacular newspapers.[58]

There was, however, a stronger and a more important argument against reforms - the economic argument. Although this might have been the only real reason for their opposition to reforms, the Europeans had never clearly voiced it before. The importance of the Commission had necessitated its open articulation and emphasis. Further reforms leading to self-government, they insisted, would be 'disastrous' for European economic interests in the Island. European enterprise, they maintained, had been built up 'under the tacit promise of the continuance of British rule' and any 'unwise step' would affect 'the operation and destination of capital'. This argument was indicative of the extent of the Europeans' distrust of the Ceylonese politicians and their intentions. E.C. Villiers, a spokesman for the Planters' Association, had no illusions about the consequences of a transfer of power to the Ceylonese: it would mean the handing over of power to persons 'inimical' to British interests, who would use their power to 'cripple' banking, insurance, planting, commerce and the like, largely concentrated in British hands.[59] And as though to strengthen the argument, Europeans often linked the 'imperial interest' to their economic interests. Another spokesman from the Planters' Association insisted that because of the 'large interests' involved, the 'strategic position' of the Island, and the 'important harbours' - all these were expressed in the same breath -

'there cannot arise at any time a Government here which might be in any way hostile - might I say with some moderation - to Imperial interests?'[60]

But what must have been evident to contemporary observers of the sessions, who of course had only the evidence in open session to go by, was the surprisingly subdued nature of the controversy surrounding the bureaucracy; it would have been surprising indeed as the alleged 'bureaucratic tyranny', and the connected subject of the Ceylonisation of the Services, was the centre of a conflict in and before the Manning period. Some explanations are possible. The officials' decision to use the opportunity given them by the Commission to lead evidence in camera had helped veil any controversial official evidence from the gaze of the elite. Then again, on the other hand, the Manning Reforms had taken the sting out of hostility in providing - mainly in the non-official majority in the Legislative Council and in the Finance Committee - an opportunity to obtain an inside view, and perhaps an appreciation, of the inner workings of the bureaucracy; the Finance Committee particularly, had provided an escape mechanism and a platform for protest and criticism. The Commission had arrived during this uneasy truce.

On the surface, in open session, there was very little evidence of the deeper conflict. Only the planters seemed to be determined to bring up the subject of the officials. On no account, the Commission was told, should the Civil and public services be tampered with, unless of course to strengthen their 'position' - which obviously meant power. Indeed, they pointed out, Ceylonisation of the services had gone on too far and too fast and it was now time to 'call a halt'.[61] They had their reasons: the efficiency of the Administration was at stake; only the European officer was able to provide the 'elements of experience and continuity'; and besides, the 'education' of the Ceylonese required the 'strength' and the 'presence' of these officials for 'a very long time to come'.[62] Though the planters' expression of concern over the 'dwindling' strength and power of officials was, no doubt, an expression of the traditional bond of friendship and understanding between

these two groups, it was not without other, perhaps lesser, motives. The Planters' Association decided to confide in the Commission: any course of action directed towards the limitation of the powers and the numbers of the officials, they argued, 'would be reflected throughout the Island at once and militate against our agriculture'.[63]

In any case, the official silence on the surface - in open session - and the apparent truce concealed a sea of bitterness. The burden of the few who elected to lead evidence in camera demonstrated the depth of bitterness. On the Ceylonese wing - a handful of Ceylonese, mainly civil servants, too gave evidence in camera - there was general gloating over the discomfiture of the 'Manchus of the bureaucracy', and the 'tin gods' of the bureaucracy, who had been brought low by the recent reforms, and a demand for further reduction of their powers and numbers. The European officials, on the other hand, suggested devices to prevent the ascendancy of the non-officials. The evidence of T. Reid, the Controller of Indian Immigrant Labour, represented this class of opinion. He was so secretive about his evidence that he was unwilling to write it down for fear of a 'leakage'. 'Going back to Crown Colony government' he argued, would be the best 'way out', if that can be worked out;he had his reasons:

> 'I do think that some attempt should be made to reduce this overwhelming majority in the Legislative Council, because if the forces of disorder are let loose there, in my opinion it is impossible to check them later on. I do think that something should be done so that the Government has more power than it has'.

Reid's device to 'break the back of unofficial power' was revealing. The plan was to give five or six portfolios to non-officials and make them officials pro tem; and this, he declared, would make 'things alright' because,

> 'it will induce good behaviour all round as every man will see he is not going to get a portfolio from the Governor of Ceylon if he goes in for talking claptrap, and it will have an extraordinary effect on the tone of the Legislative Council'.[65]

Even this strategm, Reid went on to say, was proposed as a last resort because the very thought of a Ceylonese Ministry would

> 'be terrible. I anticipate gross injustice in making appointments. I do not see how you would get away from it'.

But he was certain of one thing: that these proposed Ceylonese 'Ministers' should be kept away from Imperial matters,

> 'everything with the security of the State, immigration and emigration, quarantine, customs, shipping, everything connected with ports and finance'.

But why finance, asked the Commissioners. Reid's answer was characteristic - 'it is utterly impossible to trust these people with financial control'.[66]

European attitudes and arguments before the Commission did not help heal the wounds and remove misunderstandings between the Europeans and the Ceylonese elite. In fact, the gulf seemed only widened. Those Ceylonese elite who analysed the European arguments found in them a 'last stand' to 'retain a privileged position' which they had held for 'too long' with the blessing of the Colonial Government.[67] Now, at last, these critics said, the Europeans' real intentions lay 'exposed': 'the hypocrisy of those who mouthed soft platitudes about their concern for the "native"'.[68] A newspaper which reflected these views cautioned the Commissioners about the danger of giving weight to opinions of 'people who are peculiarly unfitted to speak for others in the Island'; indeed,

> 'people who live in self-centred exclusiveness of their own are by no means reliable advisers in regard to matters pertaining to others. The danger is particularly great in political matters...their speeches show a remarkable lack of appreciation of Ceylonese aspirations'.[69]

The Report of the Donoughmore Commissioners, when it appeared in July 1928, did not help to diminish the misunderstandings between the Ceylonese and the Europeans. If at all, it only served to exacerbate the existing misunderstandings. The Report viewed the European community as in a 'special position' in Ceylon, owing to their 'small numbers', the concentration in their hands of the 'general industrial and financial interests in the Island' and the possibility of their 'elimination' from the Legislative Council in the new arrangement envisaged by the Report. The Commissioners thought it necessary to achieve the 'desirable' representation of Europeans by some means. On the other hand, they argued, if other communal representation was to be eliminated - as they, in fact, proposed - in the new constitution, it might seem an invidious distinction if the Europeans were to be granted communal representation. The

scheme they devised was a system of nomination: that after a general election, the Governor should have the power of nominating to the State Council - the Legislative Council was to be so renamed - up to twelve unofficial members, of whom not more than six should be Europeans. By this system the Report proposed to double the representation of the Europeans in the new Constitution.

Having dealt with the problem of representation, the Report turned its attention to the thorny problem of the public service.[70] The Report's picture of the lives and times of the European officials was a gloomy one indeed. They were said to be a body of men 'exiled from the temperate climate which is their birthright and posted in a tropical country thousands of miles from their homes: a country in which it is impossible for them to bring up their children and from which it is essential for the sake of their own health that they should proceed on leave of absence at regular intervals'. Their condition was said to be the more burdensome because Ceylon was a country in whose service they are compelled 'to preserve at considerable cost a standard of living and hospitality in keeping with their own traditions and those of a service which for over 125 years has represented a great Imperial power'.

This situation, the Report believed, was in itself bearable, but for a 'combination of circumstances' that had recently emerged to 'dishearten the Ceylon Services, to hamper their initiative and undermine their moral'. What was the 'combination of circumstances' that led to the officials' plight? One reason was the failure to make the essential reforms and adjustments of the Services along with the reforms in the political field. Indeed, the political reforms had been achieved largely at the expense of the personal well-being of the individual officers: in creating an unofficial majority in the Legislative Council without executive responsibility, the Manning Constitution had driven the unofficial members into the 'artificial position of a permanent opposition'; an opportunity had thus been given to embarrass

the Government and therefore its officers.

The Report's contention was that the opportunity in fact had been readily seized by the unofficial members. And here was the real source of the officials' troubles. The generally subdued Report revealed a sudden harshness in its criticism of the unofficials - mainly in the Finance Committee. The Report commented that,

> 'in the Council, in the sessions of the Finance Committee, on the public platform and in the Press attack followed attack and criticism was heaped on criticism. Policy was too frequently discussed in terms of personalities and the discussion carried at times beyond the bounds of what was courteous or decent. The imputation of doubtful motives accompanied disagreement with particular action; and allegations of all sorts were made against those who had little opportunity for reply. Though the Heads of Departments were naturally the worst sufferers, no class or grade of public officer was exempt from these painful experiences. Instead therefore of receiving that co-operation from elected members which they might reasonably have looked for, public officers found that under the new regime they must expect their endeavours to be met by ill-informed obstruction, their decisions to be greeted by personal disparagement. Never had they stood in greater need of support by a strong executive'.[71]

The Report continued the criticism:

> 'we have seen convincing evidence of the irresistible pressure brought to bear by unofficial Councillors upon European Heads of Departments. The points at issue have often been trivial, racial or personal, but in their sum they have depressed the moral of the Services'.[72]

And because of what they called the 'legacy of discontent and because of the danger that future conditions of service - salaries, pensions and so forth - might become 'subject to the caprice of the Council', the Commissioners recommended three main safeguards. Firstly, a 'right to retire on proportionate pension with compensation, for loss of career'; this safeguard was said to provide a 'means of escape for those who might be temperamentally unsuited to their changed environment'. The 'changed environment' was, of course, the new situation of having to work under Ceylonese ministers. Secondly, a provision in the new Order in Council of an article providing that the final decision in all matters affecting the pay, allowances, pensions, prospects and conditions of service of public servants shall be vested in the Secretary of State. A third recommendation was the appointment of a Commission from Britain charged

with the special duty of reviewing the salaries and conditions of public officers.

The Commissioners were not unaware of the hazardous ground they were treading. They were, for instance, aware of the risk of the possible 'exodus' of public servants under the generous conditions of retirement provided in the first safeguard. Such an eventuality, of course, had to be prevented as otherwise the whole Colonial concept would be in jeopardy; the continuity of the Administration 'had to be safeguarded' and the Service must not be 'imperilled'. Hence their determination to provide security for the existing personnel and protect future entrants from uncertainty of tenure. The second and third recommendations were calculated to meet these difficulties.

This same anxiety to preserve the 'continuity of administration' seemed to have influenced the design as well as the composition of the Commission's famous Committee System of Government. The seven Executive Committees - into which the new State Council was to be divided - under local Ministers were designed to look after seven departments concerned with the internal affairs of the Island. A Minister was said to be 'individually responsible' together with his respective Committee to the Council for the direction and control of the department. Three other departments of 'Imperial importance' - and this is relevant to our study of the Europeans - were to be handed over to three European 'permanent officials' - the Officers of State. There were no Executive Committees associated with them but they were to be ex-officio Members of Council. It was implied that the three Officers of State were neither to be appointed by nor answerable to any authority in Ceylon; they were to be outside the control of the Legislature and were to be responsible only to the Colonial Office through the Governor of Ceylon; and none of them was to have the privilege of voting but each of them was to enjoy the status of a Minister.

The Report's concept of matters of 'imperial importance', handed over to the three European Officers of State, was very significant. The office of

Chief Secretary - the first Officer of State and formerly the Colonial Secretary - was to handle external affairs, defence, the drafting of legislation and, significantly, the control of the public service administration; the public service administration was defined to be the discipline, appointment and transfers of public servants. The sensitive issues of the public service were thus carefully hived off from the control of the Legislature - hence from the hands of the Ceylonese.

The Imperial interests handed over to the Treasurer - the second Officer of State - were even more significant. The Treasurer was to be responsible for the collection, disbursement and custody of all revenue; his duties also included the preparation of the annual Budget and estimates and of supplementary estimates, the control of investment of state funds, including the making of loans to local authorities, and the management of the public debt. He was to be the general overseer of the expenditure of all the departments: indeed, he was to be in 'intimate touch with the financial aspects of all questions from their inception' and he was to be given an 'ample opportunity of expressing his opinion from the financial point of view in the initial stage of a proposal, in the intermediate stage...and in the final stage of discussion in Council'. The Commission had thus ensured that unless the Treasurer certified that a Bill was free from provisions that would affect the financial credit of the Island, the State Council could not proceed with it.

The Attorney General - the third European Officer of State - was to prepare all legal instruments and contracts and advise the Government on all legal questions. He was also to be responsible for the conduct of elections.

While, therefore, under the general heading of matters of 'Imperial importance' the bulk of responsibility had been reserved for the control of the Colonial Government, the Report was careful to play down the function of the Officers of State. Their role was said to be 'largely advisory'.

And significantly too, the Ministers were to be offered further help and guidance by European officials. Each Minister was to be 'provided with a permanent official secretary' - naturally a European - who would be a member of the Civil Service. This official was to act as 'intermediary' between the Minister (Ceylonese) and Heads of Departments (European).

With the exception, perhaps, of the sections dealing with the franchise question, the Report's sections on the Europeans were to prove the most controversial. The increase of European representation was not seriously criticised; except for some barbed references to the 'preferential treatment' extended to their 'kith and kin' - which, after all, was said to be understandable as 'blood is thicker than water' - and the description of the Report's case for increased representation as the 'blackest spot' among the 'black spots' in the Report, the criticism of increased representation could not be termed harsh.[73]

But it was another matter with regard to the Report's criticisms of Ceylonese unofficial behaviour. On the reactions to this section alone the Report was nearly wrecked. The Ceylonese elite were incensed and the Europeans were deeply embarrassed. T.L. Villiers summed up the reaction: the 'vivid picture' drawn by the Report has come as a 'shock' to the country and 'left the Report open to a charge of "exaggeration" and brought every Member to his feet to prove that some sinister evil-minded person had given private witness to an imaginary state of affairs'. Villiers' view was that the references were 'unfortunate' and, hence, 'a bad beginning for the Report'.[74]

The Ceylonese elite, indeed, seemed very hurt. No public meeting seemed complete without a reference to the 'stab in the back'. The national Press was full of criticism. The circumstances and the psychology of the alleged 'vilification' of Ceylonese by officials in secret meetings with the Commissioners were carefully dissected and analysed . The elite complained bitterly that their political awakening had become 'interference' to the officials with ' their hitherto unruffled administrative complacency' and

their questionings of official corruption and inefficiency had become a 'revolution' and a 'cross-examination'. They had an argument in their own defence: in other countries there is often a removable Executive; the ministers were responsible to the people and could be turned out; whereas here the officials sat 'entrenched and immobile like limpets' and 'nothing that might be said of their delinquencies moves them'. What else could the representatives of the people do than at least to criticize these officials?[75]

Governor Stanley, too, was deeply embarrassed. His problem was to get the Report accepted by the Ceylonese - a prospect that seemed to be made more difficult by the Report's criticisms of unofficial attitudes. His was, however, a less serious view of ... Ceylonese attitudes. He thought of Ceylonese criticisms of the officials as mere 'rhetoric' with no intention 'to undermine executive authority'; whatever harm done, he observed, was 'not so much as might have been expected by an observer unfamiliar with local circumstances'. The officials' apprehensions with regard to their 'material terms of employment' - which the Governor believed to be at the root of the communications to the Commission - were caused rather by 'things which were said than by things which were done'; and indeed, the Governor observed, the 'Council had dealt liberally with the Service'. The Governor's final observations on the relevant sections of the Report were tantamount to a serious censure; he commented that,

> 'knowing the Ceylonese, as I do, to be by nature a courteous and kindly people, I should find it difficult to believe...the "grave discourtesy" attributed to them....My impression is that the true explanation may probably be found in a clash of assumptions rather than in any deliberate predisposition to give to take offence....The Commissioners' description of the general attitude of the unofficial members towards the Government seems to me too sweeping. That attitude has been critical always, perhaps hypercritical at times, but not continuously hostile. On balance, I should say that co-operation had outweighed opposition, and I should be ungrateful if I did not acknowledge this'.[76]

The Report's comments were to create a crisis within the bureaucracy itself. The Report contained some barbed references to the failure of the Government - meaning, of course, Clifford and his faithful Colonial Secretary,

A.G.M. Fletcher, who presided over the sessions of the Finance Committee - to prevent the victimization of European officials by unofficials. It was a criticism of the 'manner in which the Government has found itself impelled to work the Constitution' and 'its utmost limits of conciliation'; and indeed, the Report's contention was that 'never had they (officials) stood in greater need of support by a strong Executive'.

Clifford had left for Malaya. Only Fletcher was left to defend the line of action that had been pursued. The defence itself demonstrated the deep divisions and the bickerings within the bureaucracy itself. Fletcher's was a bitter attack on the few officials who conveyed a highly coloured picture of the events. Their 'own discontent' was said to have prompted their 'crying out before they have been hurt'. He discovered the underlying reasons for the discontent: it was the 'sobering effect' of their lack of authority in a new context and their 'racial antipathy' to the Asian; and he observed that,

> 'political changes have taken from the European officer his former high estate; the fact that he is a servant of the public is pointed out to him with unnecessary emphasis, and, where before he might agree to listen, he now cannot choose but hear...'

And indeed, Fletcher commented, 'a criticism, which would be tolerated in a fellow countryman sounds very different in an Oriental mouth'. While defending himself, Fletcher was also pointing a finger at the insensitivity of the European official; he argued that,

> 'the European forgets that the Administration of his own country is far from perfect, he sees that the Ceylonese are making mistakes in Ceylon, he sees that the Government is condoning those mistakes and again he draws the conclusion of "surrender of control" and "utmost limits of conciliation".'

Not that the unofficials were altogether free from blame, Fletcher pointed out; their tendency to use 'forensic' methods and 'rhetorical' language and the 'manner' of questioning official actions was deplorable; but then, he argued, the Financial Committee was 'largely composed of lawyers, practised in the somewhat florid declamation of the local courts', often using language 'without a thought of giving pain'.

The Commission had thus acquired a very one-sided picture of the events, insisted Fletcher; they had 'painted altogether too gloomy a picture of the public services' despondency; and their real failure was in viewing the matter

> 'too exclusively from the European standpoint...and they have given real pain to many Ceylonese who have not the advantage of that angle of vision'.

Many Ceylonese who read the Report carefully would have agreed with Fletcher's verdict:

> 'we have the paradox that the Commissioners pronounce the country to be ready for a big forward stride towards self-government and at the same time find that the Administration has been wrong in encouraging the people to cut the old leading strings'.[77]

Stanley agreed with Fletcher. The European official anger was one basically against the devolution of power to the Ceylonese in the 1924 Constitution. Fletcher's sin had been his attempt at 'shaking up' the public service which had 'got into a groove'; his attempts to 'work' the Constitution with Ceylonese co-operation had assumed in official eyes the 'aspect of pusillanimity' if not 'betrayal' of European interests. Many who had grown rigid 'under the old order of things', Stanley opined, regarded any criticism as 'impertinence' and have begun to 'vent their displeasure on the unfortunate Fletcher as though he had been responsible for the constitutional changes of 1924'. Indeed, the 'theory that Fletcher is the root of all evil and that, if he could be ousted things would have a chance of righting themselves has infected' some Europeans and 'more especially the planters between whom and the Civil Service there are, by intermarriage and otherwise, many points of social contact'.

The Governor tried to analyse Fletcher's policy dispassionately: his view was that 'conciliatory methods are not necessarily a sign of weakness, nor is it axiomatic that, in any difference of opinion between the Government and the unofficials, the latter were invariably in the wrong'. In fact, intrigue is rife in Government departments and non-officials are sometimes able to bring to light matters which will otherwise remain in obscurity.

Some of Stanley's comments raise some questions on the very credibility of the Report. He was insinuating that the Commissioners had been taken for a ride by some very prejudiced elements from among the officials. In a clear reference to deeply anti-Ceylonese Reid, who returned to England with the Commissioners on the P & O liner "Moldavia", the Governor commented bitingly,

> 'I warn against attaching too much credence to imputations emanating from prejudiced quarters. One or two of our ablest and most respected Civil Servants, who went home on leave in the same ship with the Special Commissioners, may fairly be described as belonging to the "die-hard" wing of the Service.'[78]

Not all the officials were Fletcher's opponents. What might be termed the liberal wing of the Service was on his side. This wing had, in the meantime, joined the Ceylonese in finding in Reid a favourite whipping-boy. Life had, indeed, been made so difficult for Reid that he complained to his friend Lord Donoughmore that he had been 'held responsible for many of the strictures passed by the Commission on what they saw in Ceylon'.[79] Reid, in fact, had reason for complaint: although he had done the greatest damage - this is evident from a perusal of the secret evidence - there were a number of others who had conveyed a similar picture to the Commissioners.[80]

The official bickerings were not lost on the Colonial Office. The Under Secretary of State, Ormsby-Gore, observed that the Ceylon Civil Service was 'terribly parochial in its outlook' and that 'something must be done'.[81] That something was, of course, to find a scape-goat for the bureaucracy's troubles. The obvious choice was Fletcher. There was another reason why Fletcher had to go - the Donoughmore System had to be saved. In attempting his defence, Fletcher had spoken too much and too hard. Even the Commissioners did not want him there: Cowell reported that the Commissioners had 'in private' condemned his policy more strongly than he had ever done.[82] The Commissioners, recalled Cowell, 'unanimously and strongly hold the opinion that in order that their recommendations may have a fair chance of success, it is essential that Mr. Fletcher should be transferred elsewhere'.[83] Even Ormsby-Gore observed that a new man must be found because, Sir Wilfrid Woods - the man

tipped to be the new Treasurer - was 'very antipathetic to Mr. Fletcher and vice versa' and that the new Chief Secretary 'however well he might deal with the Ceylonese' must be able 'to get across' to a very difficult bureaucracy.[84] Sir S. Wilson, the Permanent Under Secretary of State, pronounced the verdict: that 'Mr. Fletcher will have to be moved'. So. Fletcher was moved.[85] The Fletcher affair seemed to suggest that too much sympathy with the native was 'dangerous policy' and 'abdication of power'.[86]

The Commission's apparent loss of cool regarding unofficial attitudes has yet to be explained. The Ceylonese placed blame on Reid and company who visited the Commission 'by night'. But there seemed to be other motives why the Commission acted the way it did: Cowell, who always appeared to possess a deep insight into the workings of the Commission's mind - he had a good friend in Sir Alexander Clutterbuck, the Secretary of the Commission - came out with another explanation; he observed that,

> 'the Commission had to put in some strong criticism of this sort as a justification of their proposals with regard to the Governor's powers and the control of the Civil Service.'[87]

Cowell's reason seems to explain the seemingly unguarded harshness. The officials in their secret evidence had demanded the curbing of unofficial power.[88] In the Report itself there were references to the 'fresh tendency to question salaries and allowances' and the 'caprice of the Council'. The Commissioners had a real problem there: when they decided to curb the powers of the unofficials with respect to the Civil Service they had also to make the decision seem credible. Cowell's analysis thus, that the Commissioners had to draw a suitable, perhaps touched-up, picture to enhance the need for control, seems reasonable indeed.

On the whole, however, the European reaction to the Report was favourable. De Mauny writing to Lord Donoughmore reported that the European reception to the Report,

> 'was excellent. The Times of Ceylon alone and a few diehards like Burns made fools of themselves as usual'.[89]

The Europeans had, indeed, reason to be satisfied with the Report. Almost all the European demands had been met; representation had been doubled; the planting and commercial interest safeguarded by two carefully worded clauses in the section dealing with reserved Bills;[90] the Civil Service taken out of the purview of the State Council; the devolution of power to the natives carefully neutralized by enhanced powers for the Governor; and even the Ceylon politicians had been put in their place.

Not all Europeans were, however, satisfied. There were some who saw, in the further advance towards self-government, in the abolition of communal representation and in the offer of universal franchise, many an evil omen for the future of the European in Ceylon. There were others who were resentful of the whole system, especially the handing over to Ceylonese Ministers of those departments, which had any connection with European commercial interests. Ceylonese control of ports and harbours and the Police Force was particularly resented.

A joint memorandum from the European Association, the Planters' Association and the Chamber of Commerce demanded that the ports and harbours, which the Report had assigned to the Ceylonese Minister of Communications, be handed over to the European Chief Secretary's Department and that the Police Force be removed from the Minister of Home Affairs and handed over also to the Chief Secretary. The handing over of the Police to the Ceylonese was considered to be 'dangerous' and 'viewed with apprehension' by these memorialists. The problem of the ports and harbours was also said to be crucial. They did not hide their distrust of the Ceylonese: firstly, the Ceylonese could not be trusted with 'Imperial interests' and 'the prosperity of the Colony', which evidently meant the prosperity of the commercial interest; and secondly, the Ministers were 'extremely unlikely to possess' the special know-how to run the ports.[91]

A similar line of argument was pursued by a high-powered delegation - the Chamber of Shipping of the United Kingdom, the Liverpool Steamship Owners' Association, the Rubber Growers' Association, The Ceylon Association in London

and The Chamber of Commerce - which met the Secretary of State. Again the main worry was the ports and harbours and the future of trade; and the Secretary of State was warned that there was 'danger of racial prejudice as in India.'[92]

Stanley, who was consulted about the question of the ports, opposed any change on the ground that it might be taken as implying 'a lack of confidence' in the Ceylonese and that it would 'seriously prejudice' the new Constitution at the outset. Stanley had judged the mood of the Ceylonese correctly. Ceylonese were already complaining about the lack of trust in them in the new Constitution and were bitter about the 'three policemen' - as the three European Officers of State were called. Any further sign of distrust would have been an invitation to a new crisis.

The first General Election, based on the Donoughmore Constitution, was held in June 1931. Significantly, of the three Europeans that contested, two - H.R. Freeman (Anuradhapura) and A. Fellowes-Gordon (Bandarawela) - were preferred by Sinhalese voters to candidates of their own nationality. Their cases were thought to reveal the current Ceylonese attitude to those Europeans who were socially involved with the communities around them.[93]

The case of Freeman was most revealing. This popular Government Agent had remained behind in his old haunts, after his retirement, to dedicate his life to the uplift of the poorest in the dry zone of the North Central Province. In the election of 1924, he was returned uncontested to represent the North Central Province as a territorial member. In the Euro-Ceylonese argument before the Commission, his had been a case that was often quoted by the Ceylonese in favour of their contention that, in the new context, the Europeans had to earn their respect; and that the Ceylonese had begun to 'pay honour only to those to whom honour is due' as otherwise it would be 'wanting in self-respect' if they allowed themselves to be 'dragooned to salaams because a man happens to be an Englishman.'[94] By implication, too, this meant that the new Ceylonese attitude was not one born of any anti-European

bias but that whatever disenchantment there was with the European was a reaction to his lack of interest in the Ceylonese and his advancement.

Freeman's election seemed to support this point of view. Indeed, the background to his election was significant. The Governor wrote to the Colonial Office that Freeman who,

> 'studiously refrained from all electioneering secured over 8,000 votes while his opponent secured under 900; the election of a European by such an overwhelming majority in a Sinhalese constituency is a triumph of personality and is a striking testimonial to the extent to which Mr. Freeman has won the confidence of the residents of the North Central Province.'[95]

On the one hand, the election results had discredited the view of the leading European associations that there was in Ceylon a universal anti-European attitude, because two of the Europeans who contested seats were returned by mainly Ceylonese votes. On the other hand, the result discounted the view of the Ceylonese extremists too - that the average European bore a conscious ill-will towards the Ceylonese; because the recognition of the goodwill of the two was symbolic of the recognition of the goodwill of the many to the Ceylonese and their aspirations.

Only a few Europeans did seem to comprehend the message of the election: that the mere sense of fair-play, of justice, and of rectitude of life, which the average Ceylonese admitted and admired in the European, was not sufficient to command attachment in this day and age; and that a rapprochement by involvement in their welfare was the only way out for the European in Ceylon. It was evident that those Europeans who resented greater responsibility for the Ceylonese were in the minority. But the majority who might have wished the Ceylonese well failed to demonstrate it; there was no visible move from the European leadership in the direction of greater involvement with the Ceylonese and his welfare.

What was clear, though. was that the European community and, for that matter, the whole Colonial concept in Ceylon were in a sad predicament; a predicament that seemed to have been built on a history of lost opportunities.

NOTES

1. P.R. Smythe, A Ceylon Commentary, p.16.
2. T. Reid, "Ceylon Experiment: From Autocracy to Democracy", Political Quarterly, (April-June 1935), pp.226-227. Reid retired from the Ceylon Civil Service in 1931.
3. The Chamber of Commerce was inaugurated to "promote, foster and protect the commerce of Ceylon by collecting and classifying all information bearing on its wants and interests". It also formed a court of reconciliation and of arbitration to parties willing to abide by its decisions.
4. During the annual general meeting of the Low-country Products Association (1928), a speaker (R.S. Pathmanathan) alleged that 'the argument that the Chamber is open to Ceylonese...is brought to throw dust in the eyes of the public. Ceylonese of respectability and standing have been kept out purposely on grounds of race and colour', C.I., 28 March 1927.
5. The feelings between the Ceylon National Congress and the European Association were well known; adverse comments about each other were of common occurrence during general meetings of the two groups; for example, Ceylon National Congress Sessions (16-17 December 1927) in S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike (ed), The Handbook of the Ceylon National Congress, 1919-1928, p.871 ff.; and Meeting of the Colombo Branch of the European Association of Ceylon, in C.I., 8 July 1927.
6. D.S. Senanayake to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VII; and H.R. Freeman to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.III.
7. Clifford to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 20 November 1926, C.O.537,692.
8. P.R. Smythe, op.cit., p.98.
9. W.T. Stace, Mss., pp.99-100.
10. C.I., editorial, 26 March 1927.
11. The Quarterly Bulletin of the European Association of Ceylon, First Quarter 1928, cited in C.I., 21 April 1928.
12. Clifford to Secretary of State, 20 November 1926, C.O.537,692.
13. Ibid.
14. Stanley to Sir G. Grindle (of the Colonial Office), 7 September 1928, C.O.54,892.
15. Clifford to Secretary of State, 20 November 1926, C.O.537,692.
16. Ordinance No.12 of 1840, No.9 of 1841, and No.1 of 1897; see D.S. Senanayake to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VII.
17. G.K.W. Perera, "On the Land Question", in C.I., 23 March 1927.
18. E.W. Perera, "Land Policy", in C.I., 4 March 1927; there are no easy answers to the complex questions arising out of the ancient system of land tenure. Even keen students of ancient land tenure like Hayley and Codrington left the present question unsolved. In the absence of clear authorities the question is bound to remain problematical; see F.A. Hayley, A Treatise on the Laws and Customs of the Sinhalese, including the portions still surviving under the name Kandyan Law, and H.W. Codrington, Ancient Land Tenure and Revenue in Ceylon.
19. Chena cultivation was a method of shifting, intermittent cultivation which involved burning down of forests and getting catch-crops of millet, maize, etc.
20. C.I., editorial, 14 March 1927; and D.S. Senanayake to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VII.
21. The Rights and Claims of the Kandyan People (Pamphlet), an official publication of the Kandyan National Assembly, p.28.
22. The Ceylonese politicians agitated for the establishment of a State Mortgage Bank as an agency for 'facilitating investment within the Island more largely than at present, of Government funds'. The

European non-officials consistently opposed this move; see Proceeding of the C.L.C., 25 November 1927, and D.S. Senanayake to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VII.

23. Manning in Ceylon Hansard, 29 November 1923, pp.691-693.
24. Clifford to Secretary of State, 21 March 1927, title: Land Policy - Principles whereby the Government of a Tropical Colony should be guided in dealing with the Land in the Country under its Administ - ration, C.O.54,886. Later a revised version of the Memorandum - with sections dealing with the criticisms of the land policy deleted - was published as a pamphlet entitled: Reflections on the Ceylon Land Question.
25. Details of Conference in C.O.54,886.
26. Clifford, Land Policy, C.O.54,886.
27. C.E. Corea, "The Ancient Constitution and the Representation of the Peasantry", enclosure, Chilaw Association to the D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.1.
28. C.E. Corea, loc.cit.; and G.K.W. Perera, evidence before the D. Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.I.
29. T.L. Villiers, address, Annual General Meeting of the European Association, 11 February 1927, in C.I. 29 February 1927.
30. Professor P.J. Thomas, "Our Economic Problems", address, Kandy Catholic Association, C.I., 4 April 1927.
31. Comte de Mauny, in C.I., 2 April 1928.
32. C.E. Corea, loc.cit.
33. Clifford, Land Policy, 21 March 1927, C.O.54,886.
34. Clifford to Secretary of State, 21 April 1926, C.O.54,879.
35. The Rights and Claims of the Kandyan People, (P), pp.22-23. This allegation could be viewed in the light of figures available:

Year	Commodity	Total Exports (Rupees)	Revenue to Country
1925	Tea	199,700,000	5,943,387
	Rubber	170,000,000	1,820,284
	Coconut	80,900,000	2,623,830
1926	Tea	213,200,000	6,195,391
	Rubber	170,100,000	3,185,044
	Coconut	78,800,000	2,423,140

The Ceylonese economists' complaint was that in the absence of any income tax, the profits from the mainly European-owned tea (about 85 per cent of total) and rubber (65 per cent) left the country. In the case of the mainly Ceylonese-owned coconut, however, the profits were said to accrue to the country; their arguments gained further strength from the fact that tea and rubber exports were handled by European companies - export firms, agents, shipping companies, brokers etc. (above figures based on the Donoughmore Commission Report, pp.166-170.)

36. Comte de Mauny, in C.I., 2 April 1928.
37. It was calculated that barely 30 per cent of the people had an income of Rs.50 per month, that over 50 per cent of the city workers were in debt and that hardly 20 per cent of the population was above the level of starvation. There were conflicting figures of the unemployed, but the fact of large-scale unemployment and its rising level was undenied; See Solomon Fernando to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.III; W.A. de Silva, Presidential Address, Ceylon National Congress Sessions, 1927, in Bandaranaike (ed.) The Handbook of the Ceylon National Congress, 1919-1928, p.893, and C.I. editorial, 14 October 1927.
38. C.I. editorial "Artificial Prosperity", 14 October 1927.
39. Evidently overstated as some of the poorest of Ceylon's population was admittedly in the tea areas of the up-country, while the peasants around the coconut areas in the Low-country were relatively better off.
40. C.I., 14 March 1927 (editorial).

41. Ibid.
42. Clifford to Secretary of State, 20 November 1926, C.O.537,692.
43. The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce often referred to a number of such issues such as Finance Committee's opposition to funds for new rolling stock required for an expanding railway - mainly a planting and commercial requirement; see The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, evidence before the D. Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.II, p.168 ff.
44. Sir James Peiris, evidence before D. Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.IV, p.228.
45. D.S. Senanayake, Ceylon National Congress Sessions, December 1927, in Bandarakaike (ed.) op.cit., p.871; also Senanayake to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VII.
46. Clifford to Secretary of State, 20 November 1926, C.O.537,692.
47. S.R. Wijemanne, "The European Attitudes", the tenth article in a series in the Ceylon Daily News (from July - September 1927) concerning the constitutional problems of Ceylon.
48. The Europeans in Ceylon found great difficulty in finding men willing to represent them in the Legislative Council. In exasperation the European Association voted a salary of Rs.2000 per mensem for a willing candidate. The Europeans were also unable to find a candidate for the predominantly European Colombo Fort Ward in the Colombo Municipal Council elections; the Governor later nominated a European; see D.S. Senanayake to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VII; also Clifford to Secretary of State, 20 November 1926, C.O.537,692.
49. Meeting of the European Association to appoint a committee to prepare for the Commission, and decides to hold monthly meetings in preparation for the Commission, in C.I., 8 July 1927.
50. Ibid.
51. The Planters' Association of Ceylon, evidence before the Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.II, pp.137-165.
52. The European Association of Ceylon, evidence before the Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.I, p.107 ff.
53. Ibid.
54. The Ceylon Association in London, evidence before the Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.IV, p.293 ff. The Association was made up of representatives of the head offices of planting companies in Ceylon and other well-wishers of the planting interests in Ceylon; the latter group were generally retired planters who were quite well informed of the problems of the planting industry. Working in close co-operation with the Planters' and European Associations in Ceylon, the Association often made representations to the Colonial Office regarding planting matters. The Association was the last to meet the Donoughmore Commission, after its return to London.
55. Planters' Association: memorandum to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VI., and evidence before D. Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.I, p.107 ff.
56. Ibid.
57. European Association to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.II; and Planters' Association to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VII.
58. D.S. Senanayake to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VII.
59. Planters' Association, evidence before Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.II, p.137 ff.
60. Ibid. (H.J. Temple).
61. Ibid.
62. The European Association to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.II.
63. The Planter's Association, evidence before Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.II.
64. M.T. Akbar (the Solicitor General, a Malay), evidence in camera before D. Commission, in Nathan Papers.
65. T. Reid, evidence in camera before D. Commission, Nathan Papers.
66. Ibid.
67. S.R. Wijemanne, loc.cit., and Francis de Zoysa, C.I., 30 December 1927.
68. Francis de Zoysa, loc.cit.
69. C.I., 8 December 1927.

70. The Civil Service, as understood in Ceylon meant the higher administrative service, and the public service - though technically including the Civil Service - was used to indicate all those branches of the Administration outside the Civil Service. The Donoughmore Report used the terms "public officers" and "public services" not in any restricted sense but as embracing 'all classes of officers in the service of the Ceylon Government'. See D.C.R.,p.124.
71. D.C.R., p.126.
72. D.C.R., p.36
73. Dr. W.P. Rodrigo to Secretary of State, 9 September 1928, C.O.54,892.
74. T.L. Villiers to Shiels, 16 November 1928, C.O.54,892.
75. Proceedings of C.L.C., 15 February 1929.
76. Stanley to Secretary of State, 2 June 1929, Cmd.3419.
77. A.G.M. Fletcher, "Memorandum upon certain passages in the Report of the Special Commission on the Constitution", 28 August 1928, C.O.54,892.
78. Stanley to Sir G. Grindle of the Colonial Office, 7 September 1928, C.O.54,892.
79. T. Reid to Lord Donoughmore, 17 December 1929, Nathan Papers.
80. See secret evidence of L. Macrae, the Director of Education, M.M. Wedderburn, Government Agent, North Central Province, and of H.L. Dowbiggin, the Inspector General of Police, Nathan Papers.
81. Ormsby-Gore, minute, 23 July 1928, C.O.54,892.
82. H.R. Cowell, minute, 2 November 1928, C.O.54,892.
83. H.R. Cowell, minute, 19 July 1928, C.O.54,892.
84. Ormsby-Gore, minute, 23 July 1928, C.O.54,892.
85. Sir S. Wilson, minute, 20 November 1928, C.O.54,892.
86. Ibid.
87. H.R. Cowell, 2 January 1929, C.O.54,892.
88. See secret evidence of T. Reid, Nathan Papers.
89. Comte de Mauny to Lord Donoughmore, 31 July 1928, Nathan Papers.
90. Clause 8: Any Bill of any extraordinary nature and importance whereby the Royal prerogative, or the rights and property of British subjects not residing in the Island or the trade and shipping of the United Kingdom and its dependencies, may be prejudiced. (D.C.R., p.78).
    Clause 10(e): Any Bill relating to or affecting trade outside the Island, or docks, harbours, shipping, or any lands, buildings, or other matters of naval, military or aerial interest, or of Imperial concern. (D.C.R., p.79).
91. Joint memorandum to Secretary of State, 18 October 1928, C.O.54,892.
92. Report on the meeting with Secretary of State, 3 March 1929, C.O.54,892.
93. The Times (London), article, 11 July 1931.
94. S.R. Wijemanne, evidence before Donoughmore Commission, D.C.O.S.,Vol.I, p.212; and G.K.W. Perera, evidence before D. Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.I, p.190.
95. Governor to Secretary of State, 1 July 1931, C.O.54,907.

CHAPTER VI. THE MINORITY CASTES.

We have already noted that the two dominant cultivator castes - the Goyigamas in the Sinhalese caste structure and the Vellalas in the Tamil - were also the majority castes in Ceylon. These two castes, helped, no doubt, by the rulers' interpretation of the caste structures,[1] enjoyed the initial advantage of using the new institutions - political (national and local), educational, professional, and even judicial - to their own advantage, to reaffirm their own values. However, the more enterprising caste groups like the Karawas, Salagamas, Durawas, Navandannas, Hunus and Radawas, and some Tamil groups like the Karayars and Koviahs, had, by the end of the 19th century, overcome most social and economic disabilities and were even challenging the cultivator's claims to superiority. But other groups were less fortunate: Sinhalese groups like the Wahumpuras, Durayi, Beravas, Nekathi and the out-caste Rodi, and Tamil groups like the Pallars, Nalavars, Thurumbars and Pariahs were yet subject to serious social and economic disabilities. These latter groups came to be collectively known as the "depressed classes".[2] The main reason for the inability of these groups to escape their condition was evidently an economic one: their dependance on the landholding cultivator castes. In the period under review the impact of change appeared more striking among the depressed groups because these had remained relatively immobile while those less enmeshed in the feudal structure had forged ahead.

The major phase of the caste conflicts between the cultivator and other progressive castes had come and gone, mainly around the turn of the century. More accurately, with the educational and economic progress of these groups, the social conflict had tended to die down; only the political phase of that struggle seemed to remain. For the depressed groups, however, the struggle was still on on all fronts - economic, social and political. Our concern

in this study, therefore, will be mainly over the affairs of the depressed groups. And here, too, the major issues for the conflict being similar, we could speak of the "depressed caste struggle" or the "depressed caste case".

In the field of politics, the Administration's interpretation of caste structure had encouraged it to support the political ascendancy of the Goyigamas and the Vellalas in the 19th century. Until 1910, the Government had always appointed Goyigamas to represent the Sinhalese in the Legislature. The Karawas, however, with their energy, education and economic strength had kept up a powerful pressure on the Government and had challenged the political dominance of the Goyigamas from at least the 1890s. A Ceylonese scholar, who studied the political and social conflicts of the early twentieth century, recently observed of the Karawas that

> 'their claims, however, were ignored in preference to those of mediocre men from the Goyigama caste....And the Government refused to recognise the claims of new wealth and education devoid of social status, for political office'.[3]

Even the Colonial Office had tacitly approved the recognition of what it believed to be traditional status rather than give recognition to intellectual and other attainments.[4]

It was only in 1910 that a Karawa was appointed to the Legislative Council together with a Goyigama. In the reforms of 1924, the limited franchise that was granted brought in only the Goyigamas and the Karawas in the Sinhalese areas and the other minority castes had no representatives in the national legislature up to the arrival of the Commission in 1927.

A similar situation prevailed in the field of local government. In a struggle to maintain a power position in calculated predominance, the dominant cultivator groups had succeeded in confining local government, its institutions, and its influence in their own hands. Except perhaps in some areas of the Western, Southern and South-Western Provinces, where the Karawas, Salagamas and Durawas predominated, there was virtual domination of the village committee by the Goyigamas and the Vellalas in their respective areas.

As we have observed on an earlier occasion, even the legislation on local government had enabled the cultivator castes, through their headmen, to control local government structures; the Village Communities Ordinance of 1920, for instance, stipulated that the Chief Headman of each division should be the ex officio Chairman of every village committee operating within that area. The obvious convenience of this arrangement for the Government Agents - that is, the advantage of having a loyal band of headmen running the village committees - naturally roused suspicions regarding the influence of the G.A's on this legislation; they will, however remain mere suspicions until authoritative studies are made in this field.

However, it is true that the high castes utilised the village committees to maintain their local dominance. The newspapers of the day reported numerous instances of oppression of the low castes through village committees. There were reported instances of village committees prohibiting the use of public wells and bathing places to the depressed classes.[5] Referring to the situation in Jaffna, a memorandum complained that

> 'in village committees the low castes have no chance of securing a hearing. They are obliged to stand outside the building and, without their being called or their evidence being heard, cases are tried and decided against them. The members of the village committees are all people of the high caste, and it often happens that the persecutors of the low caste villagers are sitting in judgment on the persecuted'.[6]

However, the majority castes were less successful in their attempts to prevent the educational progress of the minority castes. The Government's educational policy, and the missionary involvement in education, had made such discrimination difficult. The compulsory system of vernacular education for all children of school-going age and a recent introduction of the significant anti-discrimination clause in the education code[7] were directed against such discrimination. But while the Department of Education was satisfied that equality of educational opportunity had been fairly achieved in the Sinhalese areas, it admitted failure in the Tamil areas. The truth was that the code while dealing with admission of pupils had not foreseen 'differential treatment' being given to pupils after they had been

admitted to a school. The children of the depressed castes were often made to sit on the floor while those of the higher castes sat on benches.[8] Such discriminatory treatment often discouraged depressed class children from attending school. Indeed, an association which worked for the uplift of the depressed - the United Tamil League - complained that,

> 'the admission of our children into state-aided Hindu schools is one of the burning questions that require immediate solution. These schools, as a rule, have closed their doors against the children of the depressed classes. Even in the case of the mission schools except the Roman Catholic schools, admission is confined only to a few cases where Hindu influence and opposition are not strong. All excuses are resorted to by the non-willing school authorities to refuse admission and to cunningly escape the notice of the Education Department'.[9]

Some Hindu groups had an explanation for this attitude: there was no question of caste, they argued, but only a question of class 'like in the West'; the higher 'classes' were said to 'naturally' resent the association of their children with those from 'rustic homes' who are usually very 'ill-mannered'.

When seen in the context of deep-seated prejudices of the extreme elements which violently opposed any commerce with the depressed groups, this reference to classes seems merely an excuse. The extreme views of the Sinhalese, who called himself the Chairman of the Goyigama Association[10] and who obviously shared the views of his Tamil counterparts, seemed to provide a safer explanation for high caste attitudes; he wrote to the Commission that,

> 'if the greyhound refuses to mate with the pariah what complaint can the Englishman make?....The mental outlook of the real high caste differs vastly from that of the different low castes. The social barriers are due to the varying atmospheres. To preach against caste is like preaching to a gentleman of the advisability of experimenting with a prostitute'.[11]

The powerful Hindu Board of Education, a Vellala-dominated group, had a solution to the problem; it advocated separate schools for the depressed children. Such moves, however, were violently opposed by the depressed groups.[12]

The Government had always declared its neutrality with regard to caste in appointments to the public service; true merit, competence and fitness of an individual were said to be the only criteria of selection. But the policy of enquiring after caste status on the application forms and at interviews and the virtual monopoly of the public services by high castes made the

depressed castes suspect the good intentions of the Government. In 1926, in answer to some questions in the Legislative Council, the Government admitted that enquiring about a person's caste was necessary so as to exclude certain castes from certain departments like the Medical and the Police Departments, because in such departments the low castes were unable to perform their tasks efficiently and without causing 'undesirable friction and embarrassment'. The Government also admitted to using caste as a criterion of selection and asserted that the Heads of Departments could 'rightly refuse' the appointment of members of certain castes. In fact, it was said to be their 'duty' to do so considering the caste-ridden nature of Ceylonese society. The Government did not even apologise for its policy, it proposed to 'continue the practice'.[13]

In a despatch to the Colonial Office, Clifford admitted that he was merely continuing the practice of his predecessors and that the Government had always 'carefully considered' the castes of applicants before appointment. The Governor's position was that this policy had to be continued if the Administration were to insure the efficiency of its services. But it is significant that the Governor, to justify his exclusion of low castes from the Police Force, decided to cite a secret report of the Acting Inspector General of Police, T.P. Attygalle, who was a Goyigama.[14]

The Government's statement in the House, combined with some statements made by a Goyigama aristocrat, Meedeniya Adigar, to a Select Committee on the Police Force that some named low castes (Wahumpura, Batgam and Berawa) should be excluded from the Force,[15] touched off one of the most bitter controversies in the history of caste in Ceylon. The national newspapers, for instance, were almost unanimous in their condemnation of the Government's attitude. The Ceylon Morning Leader, a Karawa-oriented journal during this period, in a hard-hitting editorial attacked what it called the 'hand of the Government in observing and perpetuating the pernicious influence of caste in its own sphere'; and it found the Government's 'lame excuse' aimed at keeping out the

minority castes 'disconcerting'. The policy, moreover, was said to be a capitulation to high caste arrogance and was a 'show of weakness and a sign of fear' of the Government.[16]

It was also during this period that publicity was given to other instances in which the Government was involved in caste issues. There was, for instance, the embarrassing case of the 'half naked headmen'. In 1927, in an answer to a question in Council, the Government admitted that the minor headmen of the Batgama and Henaya castes were not permitted to cover themselves above their waists when they appeared before Government Agents, because 'as at present advised the Government is of opinion that the removal of such practices would be imprudent and mischievous in its results'.[17]

Clifford was of course deeply embarrassed that the Government had to make those admissions; and he was bitter against the two Low-country politicians - C.W.W. Kannangara (Goyigama)and C.H.Z. Fernando (Karawa)- who raised these questions in the House. Clifford's assessment of the motives behind the questions and the questioners, however, could shed some light on the new elite, whose representatives these two politicians were, and their thinking on caste. Clifford asserted:

> 'this is a congenial task for any comparatively low caste Unofficial Member of Council to undertake, while it affords to higher caste Members a gratifying opportunity of displaying their broad-mindedness and of making generous gestures that will add to their popularity with low caste folk among their constituents, and yet will cost them nothing'.[18]

Though uttered in anger, the assessment seems a fairly sound one when one considers the general thinking of the new elite.

It was evident that the system of justice had often been used to the advantage of the high castes. Juries, for instance, the low castes maintained, were often packed against the depressed castes even on issues between the high and the depressed castes.[19] Though it was true that high castes predominated in juries, it might have been due to unavoidable circumstances: in Jaffna, for example, where such occurrences were said to be frequent, it seemed only reasonable that high castes were called for jury service because they were the better educated, whereas the depressed castes were educationally very

backward. All the same, the system of justice seemed to have succeeded little in diminishing high caste injustice to the depressed castes; two young Vellalas, accused of tearing off the jacket (blouse) of a Nukkuwa young woman and causing scratches on her body, were defended by the high caste Tamil lawyer-Legislative Councillor W. Duraiswamy; the case of the defence was that 'this woman was not allowed to wear a jacket by custom... she flouted the law'; indeed, it was argued that the young men had not committed this act 'with any malicious or outrageous intent', but only to safeguard a custom. The judge cautioned the young men and fined them 20 rupees each.[20] Some national newspapers were critical of the way the case and similar cases were handled in the courts of law. The Ceylon Independent wrote in an editorial that

> 'the learned judge has entirely misconceived the nature of the case and the punishment the accused deserved....To associate caste with such brutality and cowardice might be a paying business in the circumstances of the case but it leaves us completely unconvinced'.[21]

After this survey of the minority caste situation in relation to the majority or high castes and to Government policy, we may now turn our attention to the main lines of development in the caste scene in Ceylon during the period under study. Here we observe a number of revolutionary developments: first, the new elites' involvement with the depressed castes in a joint struggle; second, the emergence of depressed caste associations; and third, an upsurge of caste violence.

The new elite, who were becoming impatient with the Government's continued flirtation with the traditional elite, joined forces with the depressed caste groups. It was a mutually beneficial alliance. The 'nationalist' new elite were determined to impair the reputation of the 'reactionary' headmen and the depressed caste groups were equally anxious to cast the headmen's power from off their backs. We have already observed the efforts of the new elite to embarrass the Administration in the Legislative Council. They combined these efforts with agitation through their organisations - mainly the Ceylon National Congress and the mahajana sabhas.

The Congress campaign for equal treatment to the depressed castes was inaugurated during its annual sessions in 1926. The Presidential address of E.W. Perera set the tone: he commented that

> 'it is no wonder that a country with a ruling caste - the white Brahmins, as they are called in India - will seek to interpose barriers to divide our people, to push down instead of levelling up and support inherited imbecility which dreads open competition. The reasons given by the Government are senseless and absurd, and we shall have to see to it that character and capacity are the only avenues to office in this country and not caste or creed or community'.[22]

The strategy of the campaign was clear: a calculated onslaught on the Headman System, which was considered the citadel of traditional elite power and the fortress of 'entrenched privilege'; this would embarrass the Administration for its alleged 'special relationship' with what they called 'this cloud of corruption'. An imposing array of arguments were marshalled against the system. The central one was that the system was an 'anachronism'; an archaic institution which had no valid reason for survival in the twentieth century - that a people who were being permeated by democratic ideas and ideals could not be expected to acquiesce in a leadership based on inherited privilege. To this argument was added the one of corruption and 'family'bandyism'[23] - a condition, indeed, whose existence the Administration admitted but which it did little to prevent; Clifford admitted that

> 'influential headmen have contrived gradually to secure a network of minor posts, within and without the local kachcheri - viz. the Provincial or District office - for members of their families....there can be no doubt that the extent to which this sort of thing has been allowed to occur in certain Districts is patently undesirable, is calculated to produce bad results, and affords very ample justification for adverse criticism. Unfortunately it is not possible to undo in a moment something which is the gradual growth of years; and though I am doing what I can, as the opportunity presents itself, to break up "family bandyism" wherever it exists by transferring officers to distant parts of the country, the process is bound to be slow and, in the meanwhile, "bandyism" provides a very efficient cudgel with which those who dislike it can freely belabour the headman-system'.[24]

In addition to this agitation, positive steps were taken to dislodge the headmen from their position of local leadership. Organised action by the new elite-depressed caste combination led the headmen into an increasingly defensive position. There was, for example, a determined campaign to wrest the control of the village committees from the hands of the headmen. The Village

Committee election days saw Congress politicians, who came from distant places to 'help' the villagers. In the Thumpane Village Committee elections in July 1927, the Ratemahatmaya (Chief Headman), learning that the depressed castes were well organised, published a poster with a false date for the elections. When the depressed castes turned up on the published date they discovered that the Ratemahatmaya had already been elected by his henchmen. A Congress politician helped the depressed group to expose the irregularity and bring the Ratemahatmaya to book.[25] The Durayi of Kadugannawa planned a coup to oust an entrenched Goyigama Ratemahatmaya-President from the Kadugannawa Village Committee; they turned up in force and voted their man in.[26]

But why the new elite involvement in this caste conflict? Two reasons, at least emerge: for one thing, it seemed a shrewd calculation of the new elite to use depressed caste discontent to enhance their position of leadership and convince a reluctant Administration that they and not the traditional elite were the real leaders of the country; and for another, at least in the Kandyan setting, it was a new elite effort to obtain Kandyan depressed class aid in order to foil the separatist campaign of the aristocrats of the Kandyan National Assembly, to which they were bitterly opposed.

The twenties also witnessed the emergence of a number of caste associations, mainly of depressed castes. Two types of association are identifiable. Some of these were horizontally mobilized paracommunities, which acted as interest groups to press for the 'rights' of their own castes; these often originated as local mahajana sabhas and later expanded to national proportions; A second type of broad-based association, often high-caste Christian-led, claimed to speak for a whole group of castes like the depressed castes. Most associations of both types had their beginnings in the aftermath of the elections of 1924 - in the mood of failure of minority caste groups to obtain representation. In the evident absence of constructive political and social programmes, these associations seemed merely to drift on a wave of protest against government 'insensitivity' to their plight and high caste 'arrogance'. But the announcement of the Commission, in early 1927, provided the incentive

and the drive for determined action: and in the heightened activity that preceded the arrival of the Commission they were able to work out a programme for places in the administrative and educational institutions and for political representation.

The Wahumpura caste associations provided an example of the former type. What began as two small mahajana sabhas in two predominantly Wahumpura villages culminated - in time for the Commission - in the organisation of a central Wahumpura association in Colombo. The Gramarakshaka Mahajana Sabha of Galle (Dangedera) and the Swajati Abhiurdhi Mahajana Sabha of Gampola (Atabage) provided most of the personnel, and perhaps a share of the funds, for the central Sri Lanka Swajatika Sangamaya of Colombo. Though evidently in keeping with the unobtrusive nature of caste in Ceylon these associations were given non-Wahumpura - and perhaps deliberately misleading - names, their composition as well as their aims were Wahumpura. Indeed, the objective of the Colombo association was said to be 'the advancement of material and moral interests of a large number of Sinhalese inhabitants of the Island, who form a distinct section of the population known as the Wahumpura community'.[27] Though not as well organised, a number of other caste groups like the Salagamas and the Nekathi had similar associations to press their claims.

The above class of associations were born out of the frustration of depressed minority groups and were efforts at self-help. The other class of associations were voluntary bodies of individuals across castes who were driven by a sense of justice to the depressed castes. They were mainly high caste and Christian in composition - a fact which often attracted allegations of proselytism from some Hindu and Buddhist groups which resisted change. But as these associations were firmly supported by the depressed caste groups, they could and did speak with authority on their problems. In the Tamil areas in the North, where the depressed caste problem was acute, there were two such leading associations: the Jaffna Depressed Tamils' Service League and the North Ceylon Workmen's Union. Both these were Christian and high caste-led.[28]

The League spoke for the depressed castes in general and was said to be endeavouring to 'band together without distinction of caste, creed or race persons in sympathy' with the plight of depressed castes and to 'improve their condition by means of education, social service and other civilizing influences'.[29] The North Ceylon Workmen's Union, on the other hand concentrated its efforts on the economic uplift of the depressed castes, and mainly of those groups like Nalavas (toddy tappers) who had become unemployed as a result of Hindu high caste successes at imposing prohibition.

In the Sinhalese areas too there were a number of such associations. The Thusita Goodwill Fraternity, for example, was a non-political Buddhist group, inaugurated in 1922, which worked for the uplift of the 'depressed classes beginning at the bottom - with the Rodi'. The association claimed great successes in 'educating the Rodi mind and in making the Rodi soul conscious of the manhood' that was in them. In 1926, the association reported that most Rodi of two kuppayamas (settlements) in Illukwatte (Kadugannawa) and Mawanella had been induced to give up their begging habits and to till their land.[30]

But this was also a period when there was unprecedented caste violence in the country. But why this upsurge of violence during this period? The answer could provide a deeper understanding of the process of mobility that was taking place. Recent meaningful cross-cultural studies have revealed the struggle of the upper echelons of society to maintain the positions which they or their ancestors at one time achieved against the more socially disadvantaged segments of the population who desired a larger share in the rewards available to members of that society. There had always been the need for the higher strata of society to rationalise their systems and make them more internally consistent and more integrated into other aspects of culture and also control mechanisms of coercion. In the traditional feudal society that was Ceylon, with its minimal mobility, the existing social structure could be legitimised and consolidated by the State. This was made easier by the fact of the numerical superiority of the cultivator castes, which were also historically the landed castes. Besides, in an agricultural economy,

the cultivator could demand and receive favourable treatment - for the simple reason that the economy and the King's coffers depended a great deal on his industry.

During our period, as had not happened in any other period in the history of the country, a number of factors had combined to threaten the position of the majority castes: Western institutions, which, though indirectly, had long worked for the weakening of the traditional social order, were now showing the fruits of their impact and the complete collapse of the ancient feudal system seemed imminent; the minority castes, who had realized the relationship between inequality and grievance, had organised into associations to revolt against the rationalisation of privilege and vested interest: and more than any other factor, the Administration, under attack, was showing signs not only of theoretical but also of practical neutrality with reppect to castes. The majority castes, therefore, had only one option open to them - to enforce social observance by brute force. And here was perhaps the reason for the upsurge of caste violence during this period.

Any attempt by the depressed castes to improve their standard of living by better houses, better clothes, better jewellery, better conveyances or by the use of music at weddings was violently resisted. The newspapers of the day reported gruesome stories of assault, arson, the closing of roads, and the preventing of the admission of depressed caste children into public schools or making them sit on the floor. In the Tamil areas, particularly, caste riots were said to be every-day affairs; large numbers of Jaffna women were said to have torn ear-lobes - 'evidence of the forceful deprivation of their ear ornaments';[31] jacket-wearing depressed caste women were often attacked in the streets; temple entry was forbidden to the low castes so that they had to worship from the 'cattle shed' of the temple;[32] even in Government dispensaries the low castes were often treated under trees.

Even the Sinhalese areas were not free from such violence. At Attidiya, only a few miles from Colombo, a Nekathi bridegroom on his way to his wedding,

was attacked by a Goyigama mob for wearing a comb, hat and shoes. When physical violence proved ineffective, the high castes resorted to more subtle methods: when the depressed caste children were enrolled in public schools, the high gastes often removed their children as a protest. Some Government Registrars refused to perform the marriage ceremony of depressed caste couples who were said to be dressed 'above' their caste. Certain depressed castes attempting to give 'good' names to their children were foiled by high caste Registrars of Birth who refused to accept those names.[33]

When the appointment of the Commission was announced, there began a period of intense caste activity. This was understandable. As the grievance of the minority castes was one basically against the Administration, and its alleged 'favouritism' of high castes, the Commission promised to be a convenient court of appeal. The caste associations held meetings to prepare memoranda and submissions to be presented to the Commission. Indeed, a number of memoranda were despatched to the Commission long before their arrival. Besides these memoranda, the Commissioners, during the sessions, had to face some 29 groups of minority castes complaining of their disabilities and the hand of the Administration in them. In fact, the sessions proved to be a forum where the minority demanded equal treatment and the majority the preservation of the status quo.

The minority case, and mainly the depressed-class case, was basically an indictment of Government policy. The argument itself was two pronged: was the Administration's analysis of caste, which prompted it to 'favour' high castes correct? And secondly, was such 'favouritism' compatible with the egalitatian and democratic values that were preached by the British?

Some minority groups argued the Government's lack of comprehension of caste and its workings. The Wahumpuras and the Nekathi, for example, delved into history and tradition to demonstrate their high status in a past age and indicated that the present 'so-called' high castes were 'usurpers'.[34] An enterprising young Wahumpura lawyer, M.E. Munesingha, presented a scholarly dissertation 'based on historical and philological evidence' to demonstrate

that the Wahumpuras were the 'descendants of Kshatriya princes of the Sakya dynasty'.[35]

The Wahumpura and similar exercises were, no doubt, attempts to use the sessions as a forum for their struggle for upward mobility. But what emerges in an analysis of their cases is that their demand was not based on claims of 'sanskritization' - as it was said to be used in India - or even 'Westernization' as such.[36] This is not surprising: the presence in the Sinhalese-Buddhist society of a more or less homogeneous culture - unlike in the Indian-Hindu society, where there was a plurality of cultures, a variety of life styles and a greater ritual distance between the different segments of that society - did not necessitate the orientation of mobile lower strata towards the higher. And, on the other hand, the acceptance of English education or Western dress and habits did not prompt rejection of traditional values - endogamy, for instance. Thus, while they were not rejecting caste as such they seemed to be repudiating the hierarchy as it stood. In other words, they were using modern agitational methods to seek equality in political, social and economic opportunity, and, in the process, to drain the caste hierarchy of meaning.

But the second aspect of the argument, the Administration's involvement in the 'perpetuation' of caste distinctions, was more forcefully placed before the Commission. Here again, the Wahumpuras were the most vociferous. They alleged that the British, who 'always professed abhorrence of social discrimination', were 'silently but effectively tolerating discrimination'; indeed, they were said to be 'partial towards certain classes of subjects' who were 'supposed to be high castes'.[37]

The de facto exclusion of depressed castes from certain public service posts and the humiliating implications of such a policy seemed to cause the greatest pain to these groups. The Wahumpuras contested the view that they could not effectively perform such tasks. A deputation cited instances of Wahumpura police officers who had been successful in their work both in urban

and rural situations; in fact, they asserted that nobody had enquired about their castes when they went with a warrant to arrest people![38] Here indeed the Wahumpuras had a very valuable argument; one which no doubt carried great weight in the country to weaken the position of the Government regarding caste. Often used by newspapers, the argument claimed that historically respect and respectability followed public office, and it was not necessarily the other way round; and the implication was, of course, that the higher castes were misleading the Administration into a false position in order to monopolize an important avenue to respectability and social esteem. When one considers the historical instances which accompany this argument, the claim seems reasonable enough.

The depressed class case would have been further strengthened when the Commission discovered that discrimination in jobs had a great deal to do with the opinions and prejudices of some Civil Servants of the old school. The Inspector General of Police, H.L. Dowbiggin, asserted, during his secret evidence, that there was no question of taking in 'Wahumpuras, Dhobies, Nalavas, Tom-tom beaters (Beravas), Paduwas (Batgams) and Pallars'. Pressed to answer, he admitted that the few who had got into the Force 'by mistake' served well and 'had not been obstructed in their duties'. But would he, the Commissioners wondered, do something about it? No, he argued, the 'efficiency of the Police Force is more important - in fact this is not a place to try experiments'[40]

On the other hand, the Goyigama case, as presented by the headmen, was an argument for the indispensability of an undisturbed Headman System to the Colonial Government. Their contention was that 'respectability' - that is, high caste and 'good' family background - was essential to insure efficiency and hence had to be accepted as a fact. In fact, a high-powered delegation of headmen told the Commissioners that appointment of low caste headmen would be unthinkable and intolerable because: 'how can a man go to such a low caste headman and address him as "Sir"? The discussion itself reveals the prejudices of the headmen as well as the Commissioners' - at least Dr. Shiels' - feelings about the whole policy:

Dr. Shiels: Can you conceive of headmen being elected by a system of examination like that of the public service or the Civil Service?

Answer: For minor headmen?

Question: No, for Chief Headmen.

A. It is impossible to do that for a Chief Headman.

Q. What I meant was that these are really Government officials. We have a Civil Service where young men enter by examination and are promoted by successive steps to higher posts, and there is no reason - is there - why the office of Chief Headman should be excluded from that promotion list?

A. The examination would mean, it would bring in men of lower quality, which it is a matter of paramount importance to avoid.

Q. You mean by "quality" that of birth?

A. Yes.

Q. You think that a man of low birth coming into this position would be unsuitable?

A. It would be insupportable, not unsuitable.

Q. Why?

A. They cannot go to him and say "sir". The Chief Headman must be a man to whom every man in the village can go and pay respect.

Q. Is respect in Ceylon paid entirely to a man's social position? Is there not respect paid in Ceylon to a man's character and ability as well as to his social status?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. You seemed to suggest that unless a...man had a high birth, no villager would pay him the respect due to his office?

A. No, he would pay respect to his office, but not respect coming from his heart.

Q. If it comes from his head that might be just as good?

A. That would not last.

Q. I know the prejudice, but we are visualising the gradual democratization of the East in view of the demands being made at the present time for alteration of the Constitution.

A. The villager will bow down to anyone who has proper authority but that is not the proper respect paid to the man, nor the respect needed for the proper exercise of authority...

Q. I understand that you hold to that. I agree also as to the importance of a man of quality, but what the quality is to be is a matter of opinion in which we differ.[41]

The high caste groups had another powerful argument too: it was that a century or more of deep loyalty to the British Government and the connection, after all, had brought with it loyalty and prestige to the British people.[42] A Chief Headman provided a more direct version of the argument: the Government had used them to gain 'influence in the country' and, indeed, for this purpose,

the Administration had always treated them as special friends and some Chief Headman were even afforded the 'privilege of private entry to the Queen's House' (the Governor's residence); and thus it would be unfair at this stage to let them down.[43]

With the prospect of further reforms, political demands were bound to figure prominently in the caste agitation before the Commission. But what was most noticeable was the predictability of the demands of the various groups. The Goyigamas and Vellalas, who enjoyed majorities in the Council seemed satisfied with the present arrangement. The Karawas, who had reasonable representation seemed determined to improve their lot. The other castes who were not represented in national politics were bent on achieving representation. But all groups - at least the educated among these groups - who represented their various caste cases - were agreed on repudiating universal franchise. And this for different reasons. While the Goyigamas and the Vellalas had least to fear from any extension of franchise, because of their numerical superiority in their respective areas, they seemed too satisfied with their present predominant position - achieved under a restricted franchise - to risk their fortunes in the unknown territory of universal franchise; besides, the organization of the depressed castes, particularly in Jaffna, might have been seen as a warning signal. As for the traditional Goyigama elite in the headman class, who were increasingly disturbed by the loss of privilege in a rapid succession of reforms, they would not be party to any new reforms, let alone universal franchise or self-government. Their view was that if returning to Colonial Government was not possible then the present was good enough.[44]

The Karawa attitude to universal franchise was understandable. There were growing signs that the Karawas who led the Reform Movement were becoming increasingly nervous of Goyigama numerical superiority; the existing restricted franchise based on educational and property (or income) qualifications would have been seen as a safer bet by a community that could boast of proportion-

ately superior wealth and education. The change of heart of the pioneer of the Reform Movement, the elder politician Sir James Peiris (a Karawa Christian), from ardent advocacy of reforms to a position of antagonism to universal franchise and self-government was significant. That Goyigama dominance was very much in his mind was evident from the reasons he provided for his new position.[45]

The other minority caste groups' indifference to universal franchise too was understandable. Their numerical minority position in the presence of the overwhelming majorities of Goyigama and Vellala could not surely make them over-enthusiastic about universal franchise, which in their view would only entrench the majority castes the more. They thus demanded caste representation for their groups. The only group that seemed convinced of universal franchise was the least caste-conscious Labour Party under A.E. Goonesinghe which saw in universal franchise the only hope of achieving political representation for the working classes.

But the inevitability of universal franchise - indicated on more than one occasion by the Commissioners during the sessions - turned Karawa attention to a more subtle scheme of enhancing their political fortunes. The brilliant Sir Marcus Fernando (a Karawa Roman Catholic) and Sir James were the tacticians. The plan was presented by Sir James in his own evidence and by Sir Marcus in his capacity as the spokesman of the controversial Unionist Party,[46] and bolstered by The Ceylon Independent, which was virtually owned and run by Sir Marcus. Sir James presented the general plan:

> 'I think it is useful at this stage to have the constituencies so grouped as to bring in the urban element a good deal more, and not only there but even in rural districts not to divide those constituencies too much but to allow them to select three representatives in each, only one vote being given to one man. Thus you will give an opportunity to minority communities, people who belong to other religions, castes, etc. to come in'.[47]

The scheme obviously took into account the presence of prominent Karawas who had a chance of being elected in most urban situations, where caste thinking was least; on the other hand, the proposal of multi-member con-

stituencies promised better Karawa prospects.

Sir Marcus's was a variation on this theme. His scheme was said to be one calculated to 'minimize the anomalies of territorial representation that exists at present' and an attempt to 'allocate territorial seats on the most equitable basis on which such seats can be allocated, namely, the basis of population'. A 'reasonable numerical average for representation on a territorial basis' was considered to be 100,000; but at the same time the scheme proposed the acceptance of some 'cognizable feature of the population of a district, such as an obvious homogeneity of character, or a palpable community of occupation or interest as the basis of the proposed territorial unit'. The tone of the whole scheme and the examples provided indicated Sir Marcus' intentions; in an obvious recognition of Karawa power and concentration in the Western and Southern coastal areas - and, of course, his own influence there - he argued that 'the sea-board area, whose populations as a rule have avocations distinct from those of the interior districts' could be 'demarcated from hinterland areas'. The scheme was also said to have the advantage of providing 'communal viewpoints within the territorial scheme' and assuring 'proportionate representation of interests and views' which was of the very essence of democracy. In short, his case was that,

> 'without violating the principle of territorial representation for which the Congress stands, the areas be so reduced in extent and so multiplied in number and so grouped that practically every community and caste will have an opportunity of representing itself'.

Indeed, in the long, worked-out scheme of division of constituencies he provided, the Karawa bias was unmistakable.[48] But the close and lengthy questioning of Sir Marcus revealed the Commissioners' deep interest in, if not respect for, the scheme.

There were other memoranda and deputations - mainly Karawa - which added weight to the scheme. A memorandum of a Karawa spoke of giving up the 'present delusion' and recognizing the 'stern reality' of caste in Ceylon; the document argued:

> 'some people say that recognition of caste might accentuate existing differences. I say that these differences can never be more accentuated than they are at present....What then is the true remedy...? Not surely, to keep the weaker minorities without any prospect of rising but to give them a status which will nullify all the effects of any possible accentuation of differences and leave over a large balance of influence for good....Give them a chance, and rubbing shoulders on a common platform...will be far more potent and far more speedy in bringing about that political welding of all communities....Weakness is no reason for denial of equitable treatment especially in a matter where the great aim is to do justice by all'.[49]

The scheme was indeed very attractive for many reasons; there was no departure from the principle of territorial representation, one to which the nationalist politicians were wedded; it appealed to the highest principle of democracy - proportionate representation of views and interests; it utilized the fact of concentration of certain castes in certain areas to point a way out for the thorny question of minority caste representation; and the scheme did, moreover, afford a possibility of reducing the inevitable Goyigama majority in Council. The scheme also provided another example of the use of modern democratic arguments to enhance the status and political prospects of minority caste groups and also to break the hegemony of traditional castes.

In the general reappraisal of caste that took place during the period of the Commission's sittings, one area that the Commission as well as the country was able to view in clearer perspective was the place of religion in the sphere of caste. How the traditional religions had been used by interested groups to preserve their privileges became clearer as the debate progressed. The dominant castes in the Hindu Tamil areas openly argued the exclusion of depressed castes - from temple entry, for instance - on grounds of ritual criteria;[50] but such claims seemed understandable given the popular understanding of Hinduism.

But the dominant Sinhalese who had used Buddhism for similar purposes did not seem to possess such a line of defence. No one disputed Buddhism's castelessness or the clear textual basis of the Buddha's aversion to caste distinctions.[51] And it became obvious that there was more to it than the

belief of many that the system, because of its deep roots, had survived in spite of Buddhism; in fact, the view emerged that the system survived only because Buddhism had been used as a fortress to protect it. Two aspects of Buddhist practice clearly supported caste distinctions: one, the fact of division of the sangha (priesthood) on purely caste lines, and the other, the maintenance of temple lands and services on principles of caste.

The Siyam Nikaya (Siamese sect), the largest and the most powerful of the Buddhist Orders, was a preserve of the Goyigamas. The Amarapura Nikaya, ~~established~~, established in early British times mainly by the efforts of the Salagamas, in order to 'open a new era for the cause of Buddhism' and to give a place to the 'shut out' castes, turned out to be a stronghold of the prominent Low-country castes like the Karawas, Salagamas and Durawas. The other important sect, the Ramanya, was a breakaway group of the Siamese sect and thus Goyigama-dominated too. The priesthood or Sangha, which the Buddha clearly intended to be casteless, turned out to be in Ceylon the preserve of a few castes and was also divided not on doctrinal but caste lines. The mendicant order of bhikkus did not even see fit to touch the food offered by some groups like the Rodi, let alone admit them to their ranks.[52] There were indeed protests from within the sangha about this caste exclusiveness; but they seemed mere voices crying in the wilderness.[53]

On the other hand, wherever temple lands were used, services based on caste principles were often demanded. It was true that most temples had lost their hold on their extensive properties when the Buddhist Temporalities were transferred to Buddhist lay groups; but these lay groups, which were invariably Goyigama, continued the practice of demanding caste services in return for the use of the land. For example, the Beravas, wherever they cultivated temple lands, were bound to their lowly caste service of beating the drum at religious ceremonies.

An analysis of the Commissioners' reactions to the various caste groups reveals that their own political backgrounds were no less influential in

their evaluation of caste problems. Their attitude to the Headman System was a case in point. The socialist Shiels made no attempt to hide his disgust of the system during and outside the sessions, often describing it as an 'anachronism'. Shiels, indeed, had some strong views on caste: speaking at the Y.M.C.A., Colombo, he described the system as a 'tyranny', a 'curse' and one that is 'contemptible'. But the Conservative Butler seemed to agree with the Administration's argument based on 'efficiency'; he warned that 'it is more than essential that you should not play about with a system' which had lasted so long.[55]

On the whole, however, the Commissioners' attitude was evidently one of impatience with the 'unfair' effects of the system. They seemed to go out of their way to embarrass the Tamil-Hindu leadership by their constant questioning about the depressed caste situation in Jaffna; for example, Shiels told the deputation of the Jaffna Association:

> 'I fully understand that one is dealing with a somewhat delicate subject, but at the same time it seems to me that most people in your community are aware of this criticism being made...Is it the feeling of this community, among the leaders of it, that restrictions which separate and penalise certain sections of the community, and prevent the operation of real democratic government and institutions, should be swept away?'[56]

And indeed on a number of occasions, the Commission asked for and received assurances of justice and fairplay for the depressed groups; the All-Ceylon Tamil Conference, for instance, was asked by Shiels:

> 'I just put these difficulties to you and I take it that the deputation at least are not in favour of any system which prevents the education of all children to whatever caste they belong...?'[57]

The deputation's answer was, of course, in the affirmative. And to indicate, no doubt, his own feelings, Lord Donoughmore described the work of a missionary among the depressed as 'noble'.[58] Dr. Shiels, in his own way, dramatised the plight of the Rodi by taking the time off to visit a Rodi kuppayama (settlement), partaking of their refreshments and posing for photographs with their families.[59]

But the Commission could not have missed the mood of the majority of witnesses - from all castes, high and low - who were genuinely demanding official co-operation to end this 'moral plague'; a co-operation, which,they claimed, had been unfortunately absent in the past. Their impatience was

evident. Group after group lamented the failure of British policy: 'even after one and a quarter century of British rule...', they complained. But the fuller implication of these witnesses' contention was not something that the Commission would have liked to believe: that there was, no doubt a certain relaxation of the caste system but this, it was implied, was not an achievement of the Administration but one due to the vigilance of the communities themselves - having been able to push an unwilling Government.

What became clear, however, was that even if this tendency to underestimate the impact of British rule on the 'blighting and cramping effects' of the caste system seemed a part of the plan of agitation before a sympathetic Commission, it did succeed in revealing the ineffectiveness of a policy - or perhaps the lack of one - regarding the evils of a system.

The Donoughmore Report, when it appeared amounted to an upholding of the minority case and a cautious criticism of Government policy. It spoke of a 'great concern and anxiety' for those castes which have been 'so long denied opportunities of education and advancement' and that although one might observe some relaxation of its hold during British rule, in 'all essentials it is strongly enforced today as ever and constitutes a serious obstacle to the development of Ceylon into a free, united and democratic nation'. The Report demanded the 'provision of adequate educational facilities which have been denied them for ages'.[60] Their attitude to the Headman System too was clear: the system which was an 'anachronism' was to be phased out and replaced by a system of 'travelling officers' who were to be selected on merit by public examinations and after a thorough training of at least two years. A clear response to a minority demand was evident in their proposal to exclude headmen and other Government servants from contesting seats at elections. And even their revolutionary move to recommend universal adult franchise was said to be greatly prompted by the utter degradation of the depressed castes; they considered that by receiving the vote they will 'not only be placed in a better position to obtain redress for their grievances but will gain a

status and self respect as possessing one of the highest privileges of citizenship'.[61]

The Commissioners had thought of minority disabilities in the public service too. A Public Service Commission - an impartial body to consider appointments and so on - was considered the best remedy to mitigate the disabilities of the minorities in the public service.

Almost coinciding with the publication of the Report was observed a change in Government policy regarding caste. A clear policy of 'equal seating' of pupils in public schools was enforced. The Director of Education circularised the Managers of Schools that contravention of these rules would mean refusal of Government grants to such schools. Five Managers representing eight schools in the Jaffna district who attempted to evade or circumvent the rule were actually refused the grants.[62] When some high castes in the North resorted to set fire to over 15 schools (mostly Christian missionary) the villagers were made to pay for the rebuilding of those schools. Wedding processions of depressed castes had to be accompanied by the high caste headmen. The courts were observed to be tougher on cases of caste violence.

In the Elections of 1931, based on the Donoughmore Constitution, caste appeal was not altogether out of the picture. But what seemed evident was a new departure in the use of caste at election time. The contestants seemed to resort less to the usual appeal against the caste of the opponent and to depend more on caste pacification. Universal adult franchise had forced their hands to 'woo' all voters - and that included the humblest. A Goyigama politician contesting a seat in a mixed constituency in 1931 described his 'diplomacy':

> 'caste prejudice was an element that nobody conducting an election campaign could ignore. At one extreme were those who regarded themselves as the cream of Sinhalese aristocracy, and at the other were what were known as the depressed classes, acutely conscious of their disabilities. It was a candidate's business to woo both, and many other gradations in the caste system in between. He had to exercise the greatest tact, and refrain from doing or saying anything that would outrage traditional customs. He had to pander to popular privileges while pretending not to do so. It was admirable training in diplomacy at a pretty low level'.[63]

But the description of his actual wooing of the voters of a depressed group makes interesting reading:

> 'the support of a large body of voters of a certain caste was sought, and it was thought expedient to bring to the field of battle one of their own people who had made good in Colombo, where he was a prosperous and much esteemed businessman. He was made to wear a tail-coat and look like a guest at a royal garden party....
>
> He was made the star turn in the electioneering pageantry that followed. Someone had a brain-wave and instructed the crowd to hail him with shouts of 'apey raja', meaning 'our king'. The old boy felt very regal, and was naturally elated.
>
> The man who had earlier appeared thoroughly exhausted rose up in all his splendour in the car in which he and I were being taken and addressed the mammoth crowd of his people. "You" he said, using in Sinhalese a term that the kings of old are reported to have used when they addressed menials "must support this boy. I have carried him in my arms when he was a child". I was neither a boy then nor had ever heard of being carried by the old gentleman when I was a child. But the man who was "apey raja" to that particular crowd had given his command and many votes were won that day for me'.[64]

The picture did not seem complete without a mention of the concessions that must have been demanded and the promises that were made in return for the bloc vote of this village. But if they had not been able to 'obtain redress for their grievances' in 1931, the depressed castes would have learnt a lesson for the future at least. Donoughmore's motivation for universal adult franchise seemed, therefore, fully justified.

Indeed, on the overall election results, the position of the minority castes was noticeably improved. At least, in Sinhalese areas[65] the Goyigama-Karawa monopoly of the Council was broken with the arrival of a few others like the Salagamas, Hunus and Radawas.

The picture that emerged of the caste situation during the Donoughmore exercise was that 130 years of British rule had not been able to burn out all the evils of the system. And though the minority contention of the Administration's favouritism of majority castes seemed largely exaggerated, at least its policy was shown to be based on a flaw in interpretation. If in pre-British times the caste system was only a handmaid of a feudal system and the ruling power presided over the destinies of the system - to make or break it, to patronise it or not - the new rulers, owing perhaps to a misunderstanding of the dynamics of the system, from what they found at the

accession of power; and thus diminished the power of Western institutions for change. So that it does not seem true to say - as it is often said - that the rulers used or misused the system for their own ends; they had only misunderstood it. The weakness of policy seemed to be that it neither took caste seriously enough nor left it quite alone.

But a question could be raised why the British in Ceylon did not resort to a policy that was allegedly adopted in South India, where the anti-Brahmin political movement was said to have been deliberately supported in official circles; and this, not only 'out of a concern for justice and democracy but also from a desire to foster and use the anti-Brahman movement as a counter-vailing force to Brahman power'.[66] A similar policy in Ceylon would have entailed the support of anti-Goyigama and anti-Vellala forces. But there was no evidence of such a policy. Actually, even if the Administration had been prepared to use such a deliberate policy, which is doubtful, in Ceylon this would have been neither necessary nor useful for a number of reasons: for one thing, those who claimed high status, the Goyigamas and the Vellalas, were in an overwhelming majority position and there was no other sufficiently strong, large and united group that could be supported; besides, there was no threat from the direction of the majority as long as their traditional element could be conciliated with a few privileges, like the Headman System, which could be defended as traditional anyway; while on the other hand, support of a Karawa-led coalition, the only other alternative, would have been seen as positively dangerous policy, given the current assessment of the Karawas as the more intelligent and revolutionary; and indeed, why barter away a useful system that provided a satisfied and a largely-docile majority for some ideals of equality and justice to minorities - especially when such a pragmatic policy could be defended with Western majoritarian logic and readily available arguments based on the 'sacred traditions of the natives'?

In fact, the majority Goyigama-Vellala crowned hierarchy could be shown to have further uses. Conciliating a traditional elite, who were the aristocracy

of the majority castes, could have been seen as a way out of agrarian unrest that was bound to occur in a Colonial situation. Acquiescence in ascribed privileges of a manifestly status-conscious group could be viewed as an attempt at their disengagement from their potential allies - a discontented peasantry. On the other hand, also, the Colonial power had to ensure the neutralisation of the anti-Colonial potential of the religious cry. Of the two main supports of Buddhism, one, the Sangha (Buddhist priesthood), had been enfeebled down the years. Pampering the other support - the traditional elite - could have been seen as the only available strategy to minimise the danger of an ever-possible combination of anti-Colonial forces under the religious banner. Indeed, the transfer of control of the very profitable Buddhist Temporalities from the Sangha to the aristocratic families and the Administration's alliance with the traditional elite-dominated Headman System could be viewed as aspects of this strategy.[67]

The picture presented during the sittings of the Commission had tended to mimimise changes that had been, and were, taking place. Western-oriented education, the notion of equality before the law, the economic revolution and geographical mobility were eroding the caste structure and weakening it at its roots. Moderate urbanisation, new opportunity structures in colonisation schemes in the dry zone, and other new economic opportunities were contributing to the decay of a feudal system where the tap roots of caste lay. If in the past one observed status gradations or classes only within castes, there was now the development of classes that cut across castes. This development could be best observed in the lives and times of the new elite. Except, perhaps, in the case of marriage, relationships within these classes were not limited by caste. And although this was more an urban phenomenon, even in the rural setting there was observed a certain ambivalence - not a rejection of caste altogether but a deep orientation to the liberalising climate of an open society. The mahajana sabhas of the villages displayed such an orientation.[68]

It is, however, not to be understood that caste was dying or just fading

away in the dim mist of an open class society; but it was true, that all the while the hold of caste on society to hinder the merging of individuals into an open society was relaxing.

While the caste barriers were beginning to be slightly less rigid in the framework of a democratic process by universal adult franchise, the traditional dominant castes were given a new lease of life: their numerical superiority provided them with the capacity to control political power. But no one need say that after the long, radical transformation, society in Ceylon had regressed into the traditional situation. In the process of transformation a great deal of the magic and status value of the system had been lost for ever. And with such a development, Ceylon seemed to be on the way to a type of society where castes, still mainly endogamous, could remain side by side, in some sort of caste fabric instead of a caste hierarchy, with self respect. Even if only the dominant castes and a few European Government Agents remained who believed in the superiority of traditionally dominant groups, these would not give expression to their belief in public. Such beliefs, no doubt, would be relevant in personal and family relationships, but in public life they were losing their hold. One could begin to think like that optimistic witness who appeared before the Commission: that the system now was like

> 'an old image of clay, which is slowly but surely being washed away on the advancing flood of democracy'.[69]

NOTES.

1. Most British administrators in Ceylon seemed to have interpreted the caste system to be traditional (meaning opposed to change), inflexible and supported by unchallenged ideologies: a static system of rank stratification where a hierarchy of superior-inferior relationships and ascribed statuses pass from one generation to another. This interpretation and also perhaps the reason of administrative convenience, prompted them to produce a single hierarchical scale for the Island.

   This interpretation, however, and the consequent hierarchy could be shown to have two obvious flaws: firstly, a disregard for the built-in flexibility of the system, which had historically known many ups and downs, changes and mutations, fusions and assimilations; and secondly, a disregard for regional variations which allowed 'dominant castes' in various areas.

It seems evident too that though the systems in India and Ceylon are fundamentally different, the British administrators in the two countries have offered them similar explanations. For comprehensive criticisms of European interpretations of caste and the possible reasons for such interpretations, see L.I. and S.H. Rudolph, The Modernity of Tradition; Political Development in India, pp.1-11. J. Silverberg (ed.) Social Mobility in Caste System in India; and Louis Dumont, Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implications, pp.21-30.

2. In the Ceylonese context, the "depressed classes" were really those groups of castes lower down the scale which had not been able to progress socially, economically and politically like the other progressive castes. In this sense these were not classes at all. Mainly in keeping with the Administration's reluctance to use the term caste, these groups came to be known as classes. But there was no official list or official recognition of such groups.
3. P.V.J. Jayasekera, Social and Political Change in Ceylon, 1900-1919, Ph.D. Thesis, London, 1970, pp.126 and 159.
4. Ibid.
5. C.D.N., 12 November 1927; and C.I., 15 January 1927.
6. The Jaffna Catholic Diocesan Union to the D. Commission, D.C.W.S.,Vol.I.
7. Clause 13 of Education Ordinance No.1 of 1920 read: "no applicant shall be refused admission to any assisted school on account of the religion, nationality, race, caste or language of such an applicant or of either of his parents".
8. L.Mc.D. Robinson (Acting Director of Education) to the Colonial Secretary, 5 September 1930, C.O.54,903.
9. The United Tamils' League to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VII.
10. Evidently formed for the purpose of the Commission, this little known association does not seem to be representative of general Goyigama opinion: there were no reports of meetings; and none of the leading Goyigamas were in it.
11. H.Don Clement (Chairman, Goyigama Association), to the D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.I.
12. The United Tamils' League to the D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VII; Jaffna Depressed Tamils' League to the D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.IV, and the United Tamils' League, resolution against separate schools, C.I., 9 November 1927.
13. Proceedings of the C.L.C., 21 October 1926.
14. Clifford to the Secretary of State, 20 November 1926, C.O.537,692.
15. Report of the Select Committee on the Police Force, Ceylon Sessional Paper XI, 1926.
16. The Ceylon Morning Leader, editorial, 22 October 1926.
17. Proceedings of C.L.C., 21 October 1926.
18. Clifford, loc.cit.
19. The Jaffna Depressed Tamils' Service League to the D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.IV.
20. C.I., 15 January 1927.
21. C.I., editorial, 17 January 1927.
22. E.W. Perera, Presidential Address, Annual Sessions (1926) of the Ceylon National Congress, in S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike (ed.) The Handbook of the Ceylon National Congress, 1919-1928, p.753.
23. "Family-bandyism" was a local word derived from "bandy" = a carriage, cart; no doubt borrowed from Tamil "vandi" or Telugu "bandi"for cart or vehicle - the idea being filling the public service with one's kith and kin as one overloads one's family cart.
24. Clifford, loc.cit.
25. Thumpane Mahajana Sabha to the D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.IV.
26. The Udarata Jatika Sangamaya (a Durayi-dominated mahajana sabha) to the D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.IV; similar instances in Wellampitiya local

elections, C.I., 3 June 1927; in Akuressa Village Committee Elections, C.I., 5 May 1927; in Dodanduwa Village Committee elections, C.I., 18 March 1927; and in Miriswatte Village Committee elections, C.I., 14 May 1927.

27. The Sri Lanka Swajatika Sangamaya to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VII.
28. The Jaffna Depressed Tamils' Service League's Patrons were Rev. Fr. C.S. Matthews and Rev. A. Lockwood, and its President was a Christian, Nevins Selvadurai; the North Ceylon Workmen's Union's Founder-President was a Vellala-Roman Catholic, A.P. Thambiah.
29. The Depressed Tamils' Service League to the D. Commission, D.C.W.S.,Vol.IV.
30. C.I., 22 November 1926.
31. H.A.P. Sandrasagara to the D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VII.
32. Ibid.
33. The Times of Ceylon, 17 December 1927; Nekathi caste to the Donoughmore Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.II.
34. Memorandum of the Nekathi caste to the D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.II; and Sri Lanka Jatika Sangamaya to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VII.
35. M.E. Munasingha, Supplementary Memorandum submitted at the request of the Commissioners on the Reform of the Constitution with reference to the History of the Wahumpura Caste of the Sinhalese Race, p.1 ff.
36. In 'samskritisation' a mobile group wishes to accept the traditional values and ideologies and is willing to live up to them as much as it possibly can; here, therefore, is a process of mobility which is within the framework of the caste system. Whereas in Westernisation - the adoption by an individual or a community of Western elements in dress, habits, customs etc. - is mobility outside the framework of the caste system, see N.M. Srinivas, "Mobility in the Caste System", in Milton Singer and B.S. Cohn (eds.) Structure and Change in Indian Society, pp. 189-201.
37. The Gramarakshaka Mahajana Sabha (2nd Memorandum) to the D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.III.
38. Ibid.; and R.H.S. de Silva, evidence before D. Commission, D.C.O.S.,Vol.II.
39. The Ceylon Morning Leader, editorial, 22 October 1926.
40. H.L. Dowbiggin, in secret evidence before the D. Commission, Nathan Papers; Dowbiggin's opinions seem explainable when one considers that he had for a Deputy Inspector General of Police P.T. Attygalle (a 'first class' Goyigama) who wrote a long secret report to Governor Clifford on the need to exclude certain castes from the Force on grounds of 'efficiency', Clifford cited parts of this report in his despatch to the Secretary of State, 20 November 1926, C.O.537,692.
41. The Chief Headmen of the Southern Province, evidence before the D. Commission, D.C.O S., Vol.IV, pp.214-216.
42. Ibid.
43. H.W. Perera (Mudaliyar of Wellaboda Pattu) to the D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VI.
44. The Chief Headmen of the Southern Province, loc.cit.
45. Sir James Peiris, evidence before the D. Commission, D.C.O.S.,Vol.IV, p.225 ff.
46. The Congress nationalist elites obviously saw in the new party a threat to their hegemony; hence their campaign of vilification; the party was variously described: as a 'disunionist party' (E.W. Perera, President, Ceylon National Congress, evidence before Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.I); one that was said to be 'stage-managed for the "education" of the Donoughmore Commissioners', and 'stage-managed by disgruntled politicians' (Galle Ayurvedic Association to D. Commission, D.C.W.S.,Vol.III; and it was said to be composed of a 'set of miserable old fossils' (meeting at Kadugannawa, reported in C.I., 18 September 1927). Although a common Christianity brought the Party's leadership together - the President, Sir Solomon Dias Bandaranaike (Goyigama); Vice Presidents: Sir Marcus Fernando (Karawa) and Felix R. Dias (Goyigama); Secretary: Lionel de Fonseka (Karawa); and Treasurer: Leslie de Saram (Goyigama) - Sir Marcus dominated the group. Indeed, he wrote the two memoranda of the Party

to the Commission and was the chief spokesman for the Party during the evidence before the D. Commission.

47. Sir James Peiris, loc.cit.
48. The Unionist Party (Memoranda 1 and 2) to the D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VII.
49. C.D.S. Jayasuriya to the D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.IV.
50. Temple entry for the depressed classes was said to be forbidden because they are not 'clean' as they eat meat; C.T. Muttyah, evidence before the D. Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.III; and the All-Ceylon Tamil Conference, evidence before the D. Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.II.
51. For a stimulating discussion on the question Buddha and caste, see Rev. Walpola Rahula, History of Buddhism in Ceylon, pp.230,237; Rev. Rahula summarises the Buddha's teaching on caste in three clear ideas: 1. Buddhism does not accept the caste system as justifiable or good; 2. But since the system exists as a reality in society, it is explained by reference to the theory of karma; and 3. Yet moral and spiritual attainment is higher than any caste. But it is significant that while Buddha was not seen to make an outright condemnation of the system in lay society, but only placed morality and virtue above all caste, he clearly refused to recognise caste differences and distinctions in the Sangha. See also, Richard F. Gombrich, Precept and Practice: Traditional Buddhism in the Rural Highlands of Ceylon, pp.294-317.
52. Andreas Nell, "The Rodi of Ceylon", The Times of Ceylon Annual, 1933; and also the report of the proceedings of the Amual General Meeting of Thusita Goddwill Fraternity, in C.I., 22 November 1926.
53. A number of bhikkus were concerned about the treatment meted out to the depressed castes like the Rodi by the sangha itself. Some monks resorted to active protest: for example, under the auspices of Thusita Goddwill Fraternity, five leading bhikkus (including Bhikku Narada of Bambalapitiya) went to Illukwatte Kuppayama and afforded the Rodi community there an opportunity to perform a katina pinkama; the monks were entertained to a sangheeka dhama by the Rodi, and Bhikku Narada preached bana to those assembled, C.I., 22 November 1926.
54. See Shiels' comments to various groups of headmen, for example to the Chief Headmen of the Southern Province, D.C.O.S., Vol.IV, pp.214-216; see also C.I., 11 January 1928.
55. Sir Geoffrey Butler to H.W. Codrington during the secret sessions, in Nathan Papers.
56. The Jaffna Association, evidence before the D. Commission, D.C.O.S.,Vol.III.
57. The All-Ceylon Tamil Conference, evidence before the D. Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.II, p.219 ff.
58. Lord Donoughmore during the evidence of Rev. A. Vethanayagam, D.C.O.S., Vol.III.
59. Andreas Nell, The Times of Ceylon Annual 1933.
60. D.C.R., p.97 ff.
61. D.C.R., p.86.
62. L. Mc.D. Robinson (Acting Director of Education) to the Colonial Secretary, 5 September 1930, C.O.54,903.
63. Sir John Kotalawala, An Asian Prime Minister's Story, pp.26-27; Sir John successfully contested the Kurunegala seat in the General Elections of 1931.
64. Ibid.
65. No assessment of the Tamil areas could be made as the Tamils in the North boycotted the elections.
66. Eugene F. Irschick, Politics and Social Conflict in South India; the Non-Brahman Movement and Tamil Separatism, 1916-1929, p.150 ff.
67. Parallels could be drawn with the Dutch experience in the East Indies; there the Dutch discovered that Islam was assuming the role of a pre-nationalist ideology and that Colonial rule could continue only if the allegiance of the traditional elites could be bought by granting them privileges; see W.F. Wertheim, East West Parallels, and A.Vandenbosch,

The Dutch East Indies, Its Government, Problems and Politics.

68. Ryan speculated on the implications of this development on the future of the caste system in Ceylon. See Bryce Ryan, Caste in Modern Ceylon; the Sinhalese System in Transition, pp.337-346.

69. Sri Ratnajoti to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VI.

CHAPTER VII. THE CHRISTIAN MINORITY

Numerically speaking, all non-Buddhists in Ceylon - whether Hindus, Christians or Muslims - are religious minorities. But the Hindus occupied an overwhelming majority position in a separate geographical area in the country (the Tamil Provinces of the North and the East) and had close connections with Buddhism and Buddhists in Ceylon; therefore they never seemed to think of themselves as a religious minority with any serious grievances.[1] Islam, on the other hand, was confined to two small ethnic groups - the Moors and Malays - which seemed to constitute an ethnic minority.[2] Christians, however, seemed to be a religious minority with distinctive problems. Indeed, the fact that, during the period under consideration, there was a general tendency among the adherents of the 'traditional' religions in Ceylon - the Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims, to combine against what they called the 'religion of the foreigner', enhanced the minority situation of the Christians.[3]

Moreover, there were three significant factors in this situation: the Roman Catholics made up almost 85 per cent of the total Christian population; the bulk of the Karawas were Christians; and the Christians constituted a significant and disproportionate segment of the new Ceylonese elite. While the significance of the first two factors will become evident during the course of this study, we speak here of the last factor.

Although in Ceylon statistics of this period are very defective, a fair estimate of the nature of the disproportion could be gathered. In the political sphere, for instance, the results of the first real election in Ceylon on a territorial basis were very revealing; of the 9 members returned by predominantly Sinhalese electorates only one was a Buddhist and an almost

entirely Buddhist electorate (the Sabaragamuwa Province) returned a Christian minister (Rev. E.W. Boteju), by an overwhelming majority, in preference to a Buddhist candidate.[4] It is, however, well nigh impossible to relate wealth and religion using available statistics. But if English literacy, which in Ceylon was an essential requirement for the professions and Government service, was any indication of economic prosperity, the Christians were seen to be better off; in the census of 1921, for instance, the percentages of English literacy were as follows:

	Males	Females
Buddhists	2.6	0.6
Hindus	3.1	0.4
Christians	19.8	12.9
Muslims	4.3	0.5

The high percentage of English literacy among the Christians was no doubt partly accounted for by the fact that 99 per cent of the Burghers, who were English educated, were Christians; and partly by the fact that Christians virtually controlled the English secondary school system. Again, figures could be produced, indeed have been produced, to show that a majority of those in the Government Civil List were Christians.[5] Then again, if a University reflects the economic and social conditions in which it exists, the over-representation of Christians in the University College of Colombo could be a reflection of the position of Christians in Ceylon; in 1929, the University Commission reported that there were 105 Christians, 98 Buddhists, 66 Hindus and 3 Muslims in the University College.[6] The over-representation of Christians becomes evident if these figures are compared with the percentages of various religions in the country, which according to the census of 1921 were: Buddhists,61.6; Hindus, 21.8; Christians, 9.9; Muslims, 6.7; and others, 0.2. Indeed, Sir Ivor Jennings, who grappled with this problem of the over-representation of Christians in the University was to conclude that,

> 'in short, the real explanation must be economic. Though statistics are not available, observation suggests that a high proportion of the wealthier class is Christian....The Christians are inevitably to be found most strongly represented among those who have been in closer contact with the West. Government servants and professional men have had the closest contacts and continue to have those contacts. They

> desire "English education" and most of them live in Colombo. The schools have been provided to meet their need...Western education and indeed the whole Western social system had an essentially Christian foundation. Even if there had been no prefernece shown by Governments in the past, the economically dominant class would have been the most westernized class, and the most westernized class would have been the most strongly impregnated with Christian ideas'.[7]

Here, Sir Ivor suggested two very important reasons - deeper westernization and the school system - for the predominance of Christians in the economic field, which in turn was a stepping-stone to their success in the social and political fields. But these factors need clarification.

First, of the school system. The early British Governors, beginning with FFedrick North (1798-1805), had openly encouraged the educational endeavours of various missionary bodies - at least those of the Protestant sects. The promotion of Christianity and a combination of utilitarian and moral reasons, no doubt, had motivated such active encouragement.[8] But it is also true, and this is very important, that until the grant-in-aid system was established in 1869, the Roman Catholics were perhaps in no less disadvantageous a position than the Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims. The grant-in-aid system enabled all religious groups to establish and run their schools with State aid. However, though here was a declared policy of equality of opportunity, the highly centralised and organised Christian groups were better able to harness the new facilities for their educational efforts. The Protestant, chiefly Anglican, bodies, which were in a privileged position, were able to intensify their educational programme. The Roman Catholic Church, which had hitherto more or less managed on its own, found in the new system a fresh impetus to strengthen and expand its educational endeavour.

The Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim groups were less fortunate. The admirable initiative of leaders like Arumuga Navalar (1822-1879), the Saiva revivalist, in Hindu education and the leadership of the American Theosophist, Col. H.S. Olcott, in Buddhist education in the 1880s do not seem to have been successfully followed up. Obviously, the basic problem was the absence of a centralised structure to continue a programme of work.[9]

Although the Christian Churches had provided vernacular schools - Sinhalese or Tamil as the case may be - for their rural populations, (see Table I), they had devoted much of their energies and resources to building a network of English-medium secondary schools, called "colleges" in Ceylon. These latter, because of their high academic standards and excellent discipline, became prestige institutions. Their importance was undenied: the colleges were often the doorway to professional and Government employment and for any form of higher education; and education in a Convent School - as the secondary schools for girls were called when conducted by Religious Sisters - was said to enhance the prospects in a dowry-bound marriage market. The Christians virtually monopolised the secondary school system. (See Table I).[10]

Table I: Classification of Assisted Schools according to Management.

Type of School	Christian (all denominations	Buddhist	Hindu	Muslim
A. The English Schools				
Secondary	32	3	5	1
Higher Grade	19	4	1	-
Elementary	103	19	14	-
Night	2	3	-	-
Industrial	3	-	-	-
B. Anglo-Vernacular				
Day	18	5	1	4
Industrial	5	-	-	-
C. Vernacular				
Day	1091	223	89	6
Night	2	-	-	-
Industrial	27	-	-	-

However, the advantages of an excellent school system could not serve as a single explanation for the success of the Christians. An obvious extra-alertness of the Christians as a group to new economic, social and political opportunities calls for further explanation. Perhaps part of the explanation lies in the very factors which contributed to their conversion to Christianity since the arrival of the Portuguese in the 16th century. For, after all, their very readiness to embrace a new faith indicates a certain flexibility and a predisposition to develop on non-traditional lines. But there is, of course, a wealth of speculation regarding the factors behind conversion.[11]

Some reasons adduced, like the disputed 'violence theory', are irrelevant to our study.[12] What is relevant is a factor which seems to be central to all speculation: that some Low-country-based caste groups like the Salagamas, Durawas, and particularly the Karawas were able to embrace the new faith because they were 'less enmeshed in the intricacies of the Sinhalese social structure' and thus had 'greater freedom of action'.[13] Indeed, this factor serves to explain somewhat their readiness to seize upon new economic opportunities that the Low-country provided.[14] And without a doubt, once converted, they were subjected to greater and stronger westernizing influences through their schools and churches.[15]

The second decade of the twentieth century was, in terms relative to their history, a golden age for the Christians in Ceylon. Their heyday could be considered as the period stretching from the 1850s to the 1920s, with the stress on the period around the 1890s to the 1920s. Indeed, the extent of their power and influence could be measured by the fact that they were able to capture virtually all the territorial seats in the elections of 1921. But 1921 was also to mark the peak of their success in the country; because from around that year their fortunes changed. After these crucial elections, the country witnessed a new phase of the religious revivial, or what could more suitably be termed the Buddhist and Hindu reaction.[16] Their failure at the elections had evidently awakened the Buddhist and Hindu elites to the actualities of the situation and to the urgency of organised action. The reaction itself, which was certainly more aggressive in the Tamil-Hindu districts of the North took the form of opposition to the political prominence of Christian elite and antagonism to the Christian school system.

The political opposition became largely evident in the Legislative Council elections of 1924. In the Sinhalese-Buddhist areas the opposition to Christian candidates was considerably milder, though here too, bhikkus were often said to seek support for Buddhist candidates.[17] In the North, however, the opposition to Christians took more serious proportions. Here the campaign

was openly anti-Christian; in two-sided contests between Christians and Hindus, the profession of Hinduism was openly claimed as giving the Hindu candidate a special lien upon the suffrages of the electorate.[18] Some election speeches claimed that the election involved a 'straight issue between Siva and Christ'.[19] On other occasions, Hindu speakers, bedaubed with ashes, made stirring appeals to voters: 'let not your hands which handle the sacred ashes be desecrated by signing your votes for a Christian'.[20] An election pamphlet, written by a well-known Hindu, declared that the election of Hindu candidates was their 'bounden duty' because others would be opposed to their 'caste, religion and language'.[21] The Hindu Organ of Jaffna carried on a harsh campaign against the Christian candidates. And, after the elections of 1924, where all the Christian candidates were eliminated, the new Councillors were alleged to call themselves the 'Hindu Councillors'.[22]

A similar campaign to oust Christians from local government politics was also observed. Attempts,often successful, were made to dislodge Christian members from Provincial Road Committees and District Education Committees.[23]

The deeper implications of the opposition became evident when it took the form of questioning the Christians' qualifications to be involved in, let alone guide, the affairs of the country. The questioning was based on the thesis that the Sinhalese race is essentially Buddhist and that the Tamil race is essentially Hindu. There were, however, variations on this theme. One version of the argument, which was actually a logical outcome of the above thesis, was that the Sinhalese Christians were not even Sinhalese[24] and that the Tamil Christians were not even Tamils. A number of other versions appeared: that a Christian could not be a 'true' Sinhalese or a 'true' Tamil, or that every 'true' Sinhalese should be a Buddhist and a 'true' Tamil a Hindu; that a Christian is unable to become a nationalist since his conversion to Christianity 'ipso facto' removes his 'national spirit'.[25]

The trend of the Buddhist-Hindu elite argument was unmistakable; Christianity was argued to be a 'foreign' religion, and in fact the 'forerunner'

and the 'arm' of the Colonial power, employed as a potent instrument in order to continue ~~the~~ Colonial domination; the Christians, therefore, were tainted. If, however, one were to express an opinion on the debate, it could be said that, although the Buddhist-Hindu argument seemed unreasonable in itself, the over-westernization of the Christians, their Churches, liturgies and habits had made the argument possible. Indeed the reason for the argument becomes clearer if one reckons the audience to whom it was directed: the Buddhist and Hindu public to a majority of whom religion was more a way of life than a set of beliefs; a way of life, and perhaps the only way of life, which they lived and understood, and for this reason very precious and close to them; and hence also mobilizable by pointing to an alleged enemy. Besides, here was an audience which had gained little from the new economic opportunities offered by Colonialism. If, however, the intention of the exponents of the thesis was to weaken the position of the Christians, they did succeed indeed: in a period of national awakening the Christians were increasingly led into a defensive position.

We could now turn our attention to the opposition to the Christian school system. Two serious allegations were particularly stressed about the schools: that these schools were guilty of proselytism and denationalisation. The Tamil-Hindu Legislative Councillor, S. Rajaratnam - who, incidentally, was described in the Council as "Mister Rabid Rajaratnam" and a "religious, communal and temperance fanatic"[26]- and the Saiva Paripalana Sabai of Jaffna[27] were the most fervent advocates of the thesis that the 'main object of the schools under Christian management is to convert to Christianity the Hindu and Buddhist children attending them'.

One would have wished that there was greater knowledge of this area of conversion to consider this allegation seriously. Indeed here is an area where there is much room for study and research. Until this is done, what has been said and what could be said will remain hypothetical. However, viewing the problem on the surface, one may opine that even if the missionaries had conceived the idea of schools as 'subtle vehicles of proselytism' they

appear to have been disappointed: that they did not seem to have been able to gather the harvest of conversions that they would have liked. Where one could be less doubtful was that thoughts of preserving the faith of their flocks, and, perhaps, hopes of the 'moral improvement' of Ceylonese society, seemed to have been uppermost in their minds in their determination to continue with their efforts at education.

In fact, these vague charges of proselytism were never really substantiated when challenged by the Christians.[28] Father M.J. Le Goc, the leading Catholic educationist of the period, who was speaking mainly for the Catholic schools, stated that the 'spectre of proselytism' that haunts 'Rajaratnam and Company' was a mere 'ghost'; they were challenged to discover the real truth from non-Christian students in Christian schools. Le Goc's was a cold, logical rebuttal: the Catholic schools, which had been established at the cost of great sacrifices, were primarily for Catholic children; if these schools received Government aid, they were entitled to it as Catholic parents were tax payers as much as other parents; Catholics made 'no special propaganda' to attract non-Catholics to their schools; the fact that Buddhists and Hindus preferred to send their children to these schools was a 'great compliment' to these institutions; and the very term 'missionary schools' was a misleading one as the 'large majority of the religious teachers in these schools are children of the soil'.[29]

Father Le Goc's case seemed to be borne out by the actual number of non-Catholic students in Roman Catholic schools: in some 537 schools, in 1926, which educated 70,093 students there were only 13,971 or 19.9 per cent non-Catholic students. The non-Catholic Christian bodies, however, could not offer a similar explanation, as is evident from a comparison of percentages of students not belonging to the Management - mainly non-Christian - in these schools. (See Table below).

Table: Percentages of Students not of the Management in Assisted Christian Denominational Schools[30]

Management	Percentage of Students not of the Management
Roman Catholic	19.9
Church of England	68.4
Presbyterian	29.1
Wesleyan	87.3
Other Christians	88.4

Indeed, though the less-informed tended to lump all the Christians together in their criticisms, the better-informed non-Christian spokesmen recognised the distinction. Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, for instance, confined his criticisms to the educational policy of non-Catholic Christian bodies; speaking in the Legislative Council during the Budget debate of 1927, he 'lauded' the Catholic Church for its insistence on the educational needs of its own population, but continued to say that

> 'the Roman Catholics represented 85 per cent of the Christian population. Was the country going to play into the hands of the remaining 15 per cent who sought to promote a scheme subversive of the dearest wishes of the people...Who is the puppet showman? The Government of Ceylon is only an ornamental figure. The Government of Ceylon is simply being wire-pulled by other persons'.[31]

But more serious were the allegations of 'denationalisation'. Education in Christian schools was said to be directed to prepare men and women to fit themselves to a society 'cast in a foreign and artificial mode' and to a society which has 'no vital ties with the rest of the community'; it was said to spread a 'false standard of living' and has weaned the people away from the 'simplicity of their ancestors by unscrupulously inculcating a contempt for everything national, even for their mother-tongue'; and the outcome was the creation of a public which is 'incapable of appreciating or helping in the renaissance of national arts and literature.'[32] More perceptive observers, however, although they agreed about various shortcomings of Christian schools, argued that this was a general malaise of the whole educational system, and not merely of the missionary schools: a system that has too long aped the English public school model; and one which had failed to 'keep pace' with the 'needs and peculiar conditions' of Ceylon.[33]

Actually, here was an aspect of the virtually Christian-monopolised secondary education which seemed indefensible. Even if it was a weakness of the total educational structure, the Christian bodies were exposed to the charge of influencing it, because, without a doubt, they could and did influence policy and curricula by their disproportionate influence in the Board of Education[34] and the Text Book Committee.[35] In the Board of Education in 1927, for instance, 15 of the 20 members were Christians, if the European officials in the Board were to be counted among the Christians. The Director of Education, on the other hand, although he had to be responsible to the Board, was a European official with wide powers of his own.

In fact, these were not criticisms made by non-Christians alone; even some Christians were critical. And this was perhaps a measure of the extent of the flaw in Christian educational attitudes. J.M. Senevitatne, a well-known Christian scholar, who seemed to be representative of this class of critics, even probed the missionary mind for an explanation: commenting on the teaching of history, he noted that Christian schools

> 'do not want to teach Ceylon history. To them it is a question of propaganda. The early history of the Sinhalese people is so interwoven with Buddhism that it is more or less anathema to the institutions run by Missionary Organisations. The result: a denationalised progeny'.[36]

The opposition to Christian schools, however, did not remain at the level of criticism alone. There were moves, in the Legislative Council which could have been, and indeed were, interpreted to be efforts to hinder state aid to Christian schools. Among a number of such moves, two are significant. One was the recommendation of two principles for allocating grants to school buildings by a Sub-Committee of the Finance Committee which inquired into this subject. This Committee, which contained some outspoken critics of the Christian school enterprise, recommended: a) that building grants should be given to schools only if the majority of the pupils for whom additional accommodation was required belonged to the same religious denomination as that represented by the Manager, and b) that the allocation should be based on the just claims of the different eduational bodies.[37] The reasons adduced

by the Councillor, S. Rajaratnam, provided the motives behind these recommendations; Rajaratnam observed that

> 'the Christian schools which are engaged in teaching mainly non-Christian children will naturally cease to be educational institutions in course of time or may not require any more extension. It is not right that the tax-payers' money should be devoted to any useless purpose. There is the other question also involved in this, namely, that the tax-payers' money should not be made use of for the purpose of changing the religion of the taxed'.[38]

The Government of course rejected the first principle on the grounds of impracticability and decided to continue the system of grants in proportion to the actual requirements of the schools and the number of pupils in them. However, another move in 1927 by a Select Committee of the Legislative Council on Teachers' Pensions was one obviously directed against the Christian Missionaries: the Committee recommended that 'ministers of religion, members of Religious Orders and lay brothers and sisters connected with Religious Organisations shall not be qualified to have their names entered on the register of pensionable teachers'.[39] Here, again, Rajaratnam, whose agitation had been mainly responsible for the setting up of the Committee, argued that religious teachers were supported by religious Orders and, hence, did not require pensions.[40]

There were widespread protest meetings of Christians to complain against these moves. Roman Catholic and Protestant elite seemed to have banded togethe to organise and conduct these meetings and they were well attended; perhaps an indication that the Christian population as a whole was deeply concerned about their schools. The moves were described as 'inequitable and blatantly unjust' and were said to be directed to the 'elimination of Christian schools' by 'starving them out'.[41] The recommendation regarding the pensions of religious teachers came under the heaviest criticism. Father Le Goc answered Rajaratnam that 'one who has taken "vows" does not make him less efficient as a teacher' and that even religious teachers could not 'live on pure air and water' during their old age.[42] But some Christian protests while searchin for motives behind the moves were less kind; one speaker at a protest meeting observed that Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims favoured a policy of exclusion of

religious teachers because 'exclusion did not affect them' since their clergy mainly 'spent their lives droning away futile slogans in lotus-eating monasteries all over Ceylon...'[43]

The vernacular newspapers like the Dinamina openly applauded the moves. The Ceylonese-owned English language newspapers, though recognising the methods as questionable, seemed to be willing to welcome them 'in the circumstances'; one newspaper editorialised:

> 'we do not agree that the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council as a whole is hostile to Christian schools....The Government had been very liberal in assisting Christian institutions. It is now equally liberal in recognising the claims of Hindu and Buddhist schools and has good reason for its liberality. For the first time in the history of British rule an effort is being made to foster indigenous enterprise in the field of education. It is an effort that deserves every legitimate encouragement and we do not think that Christian educationists imbued with the ideals of their religion ought to grudge the assistance given by the Finance Committee, however much they...may object on grounds of constitutional principle to the manner in which that assistance has been made available'.[44]

The religious conflicts of the period were not without their violent aspects. Here again Jaffna was the main theatre of hostilities. Missionary work among the depressed classes was said to be often violently opposed. In the island of Delft, off Jaffna, there was said to be 'organised oppression' of Christian converts by the Hindus.[45] Newspapers reported that Christian religious services were often disturbed by the beating of tom-toms nearby.[46] But Christian schools seemed to be the special targets of the extremist element: in Jaffna, Hindu schools were often built near existing Christian schools and some Hindu leaders were alleged to have made 'house to house visits by night' to attract the Hindu children to the competing Hindu schools.[47]

There is little doubt that the Christian elite generally tended to be over-sensitive over these incidents of intolerance perpetrated by a minority of extremists; a newspaper described this Christian 'touchiness' as a

> 'form of intellectual and moral obtuseness which glories in misunderstanding and misrepresentation'.[48]

But that Christian fears were not merely in the imagination of Christians - as was often suggested by the non-Christian elite - became evident from the fact that a number of more moderate Buddhist and Hindu leaders began to be

deeply disturbed by the trends. During the annual sessions of the Buddhist Congress, for instance, a spokesman appealed for toleration:

> 'many a community and many a creed have made this Island their home.... In our desire to further the interests of our religion we should always be guided by principles and ideals that inspired the great Buddhists in ancient times...and I hope...we will always be guided by the spirit of toleration which inspired Asoka'.[49]

Gandhi, who visited Jaffna in 1927 and witnessed the tensions there appealed to the Hindu leaders: 'if I know Hinduism aright' he said 'it is nothing if it is not tolerant and generous to every other faith'.[50]

But no one who examined these events could have missed the reality of anti-Christian feeling, at least among a section of the Buddhist and Hindu elites. Indeed, this mood has to be examined and understood if any assessment of the Christian minority situation is to be made. There are, in fact, a number of recognizable factors behind this mood: one was, of course, the tendency to identify Christianity with Colonialism; then again there was the view that Christianity had furthered an imbalance in the educational, economic and political fields; a caste factor was yet another; and perhaps most important, the political and economic hopes and frustrations of a section of the Buddhist and Hindu elites. These factors call for comment.

First, the tendency to identify Christianity with Colonialism as a reason behind the anti-Christian mood. Frequent references by revivalist spokesmen to Christianity as the 'arm' and the 'forerunner' of the Colonial power were indicative of a tendency to identify Christianity with Colonialism. There were, no doubt, reasons for this view: the special relationship of the Anglican Church with the Government was an obvious reason; the presence of European clergy and the use of Western liturgical practices was another; but more than any other reason, was the deeper westernization of the Christians generally and their seemingly approving silence of the Colonial presence. Such a view was, of course, bound to generate resentment in revivalist circles which considered the Colonial presence to be detrimental to the well-being of 'traditional' religions.

The second factor behind the anti-Christian feeling was the imbalance in educational, economic and political fields which Christianity had allegedly furthered in the country. At the very beginning of this study we noted the obvious economic, educational and political disproportion between the Christians and the rest. A movement in the direction of correcting this obvious anomaly, and perhaps the injustice, would have been understandable, if not reasonable; and certainly it was inevitable. On the other hand, the by-product of unpleasantness, which a levelling process was bound to generate, would have been unavoidable. This Buddhist-Hindu effort, in itself, could not be described as anti-Christian feeling. But in actual fact, the tone and trend of the movement suggested an anti-Christian element.

A caste factor was also noticeable behind the anti-Christian feeling. One allegation often made against the missionaries was that they destroyed the 'customs' of the people. One explanation is that this was a reference to missionary influence, mainly through their schools, in the breaking down of caste barriers. The attitude of the deeply anti-missionary Hindu Board of Education, which proposed separate schools for the depressed classes, could be viewed in this light.

The Goyigamas among the Sinhalese, however, appeared to have a special reason for the revival and the anti-Christian campaign - their desire to use religion to assail Karawa ascendancy in social, economic and political fields. Clifford's assessment is relevant:

> 'the revolt against Christianity, regarded as the religion of the Europeans, owes not a little of its vitality to caste-feeling and caste-rivalry. The bulk of the Karawa caste people are Christians, the great majority being Roman Catholics, who, when the census of 1921 was taken, numbered some 367,000 souls and constituted 83.11 per cent of the entire Christian population of the Island. Of the Goyigamas...a huge proportion are adherents to Buddhism; and during the recent elections for the Legislative Council, many of the candidates appealed to their constituents as Buddhists, pointing to the Christianity of their opponents as a disqualification. In most of these cases the elections were really fought upon purely caste lines, "Buddhist" being used as a label of the Goyigama, and "Christian" as that of the Karawa. Caste, itself, of course, was never mentioned, but everybody knew what the real issue was'[51]

Although it is true that Clifford was noted for his tendency to see caste

lurking behind almost all Ceylonese national issues, here his view seems to be strengthened by the fact that the bulk of the leadership and composition of the revival was Goyigama-Vellala. This view also helps to explain the attitude of the Karawa-Buddhist politician, W.A. de Silva; his over-enthusiasm for the Buddhist revival could be interpreted as symptomatic of his increasing nervousness about his own political future. On the whole, therefore, the caste colouring of the revival and the anti-Christian attitude seem undeniable.

There seems little doubt also that the political and economic hopes and frustrations of a section of the Buddhist and Hindu elites lurked behind the anti-Christian mood. An analysis of the attitudes of the few openly anti-Christian politicians and their supporters tend to reveal this angle of the anti-Christian feeling. We could, for instance, take the cases of two of the most outspoken Sinhalese politicians, W.A. de Silva and C.W.W. Kannangara. Silva was a Low-country Karawa-Buddhist whose constituency was the Goyigama-Buddhist-dominated urban Kandy seat.[52] Kannangara was a Goyigama-Buddhist whose constituency was the mainly Karawa-Buddhist Galle District in the Low-country. In both instances, therefore, the usefulness of the common and effective medium of Buddhism to mobilize popular political support suggests itself. Kannangara, moreover, had to reckon with the increasing political strength of the Galle Vernacular Teachers' Association,[53] whose goodwill Kannangara obviously had to woo.

More significant, however, was what emerged about these two politicians' involvement in Buddhist education. They had been at the helm of the Buddhist Theosophical Society (B.T.S.) - the only really well-organised Buddhist Society and one which conducted some 280 schools (in 1926) - when it ran into a deep financial crisis; the Society was said to be in a 'condition of chaos' since 'in some hundreds of schools under its management salaries were in arrears from five to six months'.[54] The Ceylon Independent, which was no doubt Christian-oriented, drew its own conclusions: the attack on Christian

schools and the demand for nationalisation was said to be a 'counsel of despair' of 'these three gentlemen' (W.A. de Silva, C.W.W. Kannangara and D.B. Jayatilaka) 'who had tried their hand in the Buddhist Theosophical Society and failed'.[55] The assessment of a correspondent in the same journal was even more pitiless:

> 'one cannot help wondering whether this new attitude is a kind of "dog in the manger" policy . It is patently true that the Buddhist leaders have made a hopeless mess in the management of their educational work. It looks as if they want the Government to take over all aided schools because they cannot manage their own'.[56]

Their active supporters, on the other hand, were mainly a group of vernacular-educated elites. And here indeed was a group that would have benefited most from the dethronement of the Christians, and particularly from the nationalisation of their schools. An aspect of their thinking became evident in some of the complaints made on their behalf: that too many 'outsiders' - evidently foreign missionaries - were teaching in Christian schools; and that these schools were recruiting only Christian teachers.[57] Indeed the anti-Christian mood becomes even more comprehensible when it is realised that vernacular-educated teachers made up, perhaps, the most vocal section of the campaign.

However, the majority of the political and non-political Buddhist and Hindu leadership was not willing to go along with the more extremist campaigners in their methods, and particularly with their anti-Christian attitudes; and indeed, often, publicly disapproved the trends. For example, D.S. Senanayake, who was emerging as the Leader of the nationalist movement, condemned the anti-Christian attitude in no uncertain terms.[58] It was significant too that the younger, and perhaps the more intelligent, section of politicians, though outspoken on many national issues, did not show any marked anti-Christian bias during this period.[59]

On the other hand, also, a number of non-Christians and non-Christian groups were a counter-balancing factor to the extremists by their open approval of the contribution of the Christians. A leading bhikku, a Chief Priest, for instance, argued that,

> 'no good purpose would be served by abusing the Christians. It had to be admitted that the Christian schools were being very well managed. They should take a leaf from the Christians and make an effort to do better. It could not be denied that the missionaries had done a great deal towards the education of the people.'[60]

The leadership of the Kandyan National Assembly too made its position very clear:

> 'today we would be helpless to voice our own grievances, but for the self-sacrificing work and the generosity of missionary bodies, who have established all the schools of any consequence in our midst'.[61]

Having probed the underlying reasons for the anti-Christian feeling of the age, we can now assess some of its more important consequences. First, this anti-Christian feeling tended to devalue the meaningfulness of the religious revival. It exposed the revivalists to the charge that they were deliberately using the underlying anti-Christian feeling to mobilise popular support and thus enhance their own nationalist and political aims. Or, in other words, it could be said against them that their insistence on the foreignness of Christianity was an attempt to rouse nationalism, based on the historical connections between religion and race. At least this was the view of Clifford; for him, the anti-Christian feeling, and, for that matter, the whole revivalist concept was

> 'mainly political and racial. It is part of the effort that is being made to galvanize into vitality a spirit of Ceylonese nationality. It is a manifestation of the revolt that is being organised against European domination...'[62]

Here, doubtless, there is an over-emphasis on the nationalist element of the revival to the extent of underestimating the genuine desire of many a fervent Buddhist and Hindu for a religious revival. But even among those observers who were willing to admit that the revival of religion was the basic motive of the campaigners, the present revival had fallen in value because of the bitterness against another religion. A newspaper's assessment was very harsh:

> 'religion is promoted in a spirit of rivalry and animosity to other religions...appeals are made not to excellence of any religious system as a reason for its acceptance, but to some so-called patriotic or nationalist sentiments..It is not surprising that lawlessness flourishes in spite of religious enthusiasm'.[63]

Another, and perhaps a more important, consequence of the revival and its anti-Christian aspect was the impairment of national unity. Evoking religious memories of the past, which was an aspect of the revival, the revivalists had already raised a barrier to separate the Hindus and the Buddhists: there was the Buddhist nationalism of the Sinhalese;and the Hindu nationalism of the Tamil, which searched for its Dravidian roots outside the Island in South India; indeed, the Dravidian-Tamil-Hindu separatism might be considered a natural reaction to the Aryan-Sinhalese-Buddhist revivalism. But the revival generated further sub-divisions within these main groups. The emphasis on Buddhism and Hinduism, and the anti-Christian attitudes, were bound to and, indeed did, give rise to disenchantment with the nationalist movement in the Christian camp. Even if Christian participation in the nationalist movement was not lost altogether, at least Christian dedication was to be lost. The obvious alienation of Sir James Peiris among the Sinhalese is a case in point. The Tamils too were to see similar divisions. The disillusionment of Tamil Christians with Dravidian-Hindu-oriented Tamil nationalism became evident in the case of the leading Tamil Christian intellectual, Rev. Dr. Isaac Tambiah. What he said to the Jaffna Historical Association indicates this alienation:

> 'It is a pathetically common sight for us Ceylonese, particularly Tamils, to go across to India for inspiration and ideals. The reason given for this unblushing mendicancy is the assumption that we Tamils of Ceylon have very close affinities with all India....We need not really go with begging bowls from door to door in India asking for ideals of nationalism....Tamil nationalism must be voted a failure if it is content with merely a national costume, however graceful, though of dubious historicity, and an irrational ill-temper at everything Western and white'.[64]

When the Donoughmore Commission was announced, in April 1927, the country was passing through a period of religious tension. The announcement, however, did seem to have an immediate impact on the thinking of the campaigners as well as of the Christians. No one could mistake the decrease in the campaign's tempo and the escalation of Christian political activity.

On the side of the campaigners there were even recognizable moves towards pacification. For example, the Select Committee of the Legislative Council

which had earlier been adamant about the exclusion of religious teachers from the pension scheme, decided, in September 1927, -just before the arrival of the Commission - to delete the offending clause. The discussion in the Committee, which had evidently leaked, prompted many a comment; a newspaper editorialized:

> 'and it is important and curious to note that what induced the majority of the members to yield was not so much their desire to be fair by the Christian ministers but the anxiety to spike the guns of those who were preparing a case for Christian representation before the Special Commission'.[65]

Although a number of groups and individuals referred to the problems of Christians in their evidence, only five Christian groups spoke on purely Christian affairs - the Ceylon Catholic Union, Jaffna Catholic Diocesan Union, Ceylon Education Association, Christian Deputation and the League of Christian Citizenship. Composed of leading Catholic priests and laymen of the Island and being under the direct guidance of the Catholic Hierarchy of Ceylon, the Ceylon Catholic Union (1902), during its history, had reflected the official position of the Catholic Church in Ceylon. Its evidence before the Commission, therefore, could be considered a fair picture of the official position of the Catholic Church on various issues. The Jaffna Catholic Diocesan Union was a similar association that could speak with authority on the problems of Catholics of the Catholic Diocese of Jaffna. The Ceylon Education Association, being the spokesman for the Anglican Synod of the Diocese of Colombo on problems of education, presented the Anglican position before the Commission. The Christian Deputation made up of leading laymen of the American Mission spoke mainly for that minority Christian body in Jaffna; the deputation was formed in 1927 evidently for the purpose of the Commission. Although a few Catholics had joined it, the League of Christian Citizenship was Protestant, and mainly Anglican, in its leadership and membership. Inaugurated in 1927 in Jaffna in time for the arrival of the Commission, the League was said to have for its object 'to safeguard the political, educational and other public interests of the Christian community and the creation, fostering and spread of Christian public opinion'.[66] An analysis of its behaviour, however,

suggested that its main purpose was to agitate for special representation for Christians before the Commission. Although only the League of Christian Citizenship could be considered multi-denominational, all these Christian groups showed remarkable agreement on all major issues except on the question of special Christian representation.

Immediately prior to the arrival of the Commission, the Christians had launched into a debate as to whether or not they should demand special Christian representation as a 'protection' against Buddhist-Hindu attitudes. One section of Christians who believed that such representation would, in the long term, have disastrous effects on Christians themselves, were opposed to special representation. The other, the more political, section felt that representation was the only way out for Christians. But one significant fact that emerged in the debate was that the two leading enthusiasts of representation - Sir Marcus Fernando (a Sinhalese Roman Catholic) and H.A.P.Sandrasagara (a Tamil Roman Catholic) - were two 'frustrated politicians', having tried and failed at territorial elections. This fact naturally raised an important question: were they posing as 'defenders of the faith' for their own 'selfish ends'? Many, who included leading Christians, thought as much; a leading Catholic opined that this was a 'stunt' of some 'seat-hunters':

> 'whether it is their love for religion which has actuated them or the nervousness which they feel regarding their chances of capturing a seat in the next election, we do not know....It is sad to find that religion is exploited for selfish ends and made use of as the hunting ground for seats'.[67]

The Christian debate was to be carried over to the actual sessions of the Commission. The Commissioners had to listen patiently to arguments for and against granting special representation to Christians. If for no other reason, the debate was significant for its demonstration of the Christian community's realisation, perhaps for the first time, of its minority position in Ceylon. And, for this reason, the arguments and counter-arguments could be summed up here.

The pro-representation argument was based on the increasing danger to Christian minority interests arising out of the 'tacit combination of Buddhists

with Hindus' in its 'intrigues and manoeuvres' and its 'organised and unscrupulous campaign against the Christians'[68]. Such representation was argued to be not unprecedented since Christians were represented in Madras and Muslims were represented in the Ceylon Legislative Council since 1899 onwards.[69] In fact such representation was said to be 'the way out of the present valley of humiliation'. The pro-representationists had to answer a number of objections: how was it that Christians, who were, and should be, in the 'van of political progress', should even contemplate putting a 'spike in the wheels' of such progress by demanding representation for themselves? The group had an answer:

> 'Communal representation is evil. Religious communal representation is worse....But the question before us is a choice between communal representation and justice - rather injustice. When we weigh the two things the lesser evil of the two is this kind of communal representation.... The minority community is persecuted, and civil rights are denied them.... Your juggernaut of a political car should not be allowed to crush the minority'.[70]

But surely, it was argued, this 'persecution' could be a 'passing phase'; why 'embalm and perpetuate' it by such a demand. This was not, they answered, a passing phase but

> 'a cyclone; and if we do not protect ourselves the result will be that we shall see our houses and trees blown down. If you ask us to bow our heads until the cyclone is passed we should see nothing but ruins; we cannot afford to wait till this passes away'.[71]

But, significantly, the greater weight of Christian opinion seemed to be ranged in opposition to special representation. This section of opinion seemed to have been mainly influenced by the long term effects of such representation on the Christian community. They argued that such representation would be 'suicidal', as: firstly, they would merely be playing into the hands of 'extremists' who were attempting to label them as a distinct community, which they were not, being as much Sinhalese or Tamil as anyone else in the Island; secondly, because such representation would be a source of 'perpetual wrangling' between the various Christian denominations, which were now relatively united; and thirdly, because this would be to invite a 'campaign of ostracism' which would be harmful to the community. On the

other hand, they reasoned that Christianity in Ceylon had never been needed, hence could do well without, being 'propped up' by 'protectors' in the Legislative Council.[72]

But whatever hopes the pro-representationists entertained were frustrated by the firm stand taken by The Ceylon Catholic Messenger, the official organ of the Catholic Church in Ceylon, which reflected the views of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy in Ceylon.[73] The journal's case was that unity was the nation's need of the moment and that Christian representation would only add to the divisions of an already divided country. The journal asserted unequivocally that

> 'we have sufficient confidence in the representatives of Government and of the country to rest satisfied that when the Catholic case has thus been adequately presented, it will be given that favourable hearing which its inherent claims demand. We do not therefore want separate representation'.[74]

It is also reasonable to believe that the Commission was disabused of any further doubts about the official Catholic position when Sir Matthew Nathan, at his own request, met and conferred with the Archbishop of Colombo at the Archbishop's residence.[75]

It became evident too, during the sessions, that the leaders of the anti-Christian agitation tended to be rather reticent about the subject of their agitation, and when questioned by the Commission preferred to be mainly on the defensive. An obviously embarrassed national leadership, in its efforts to reassure the Commission that the minorities were safe in their hands in the event of self-government, tried to dismiss the anti-Christian attitudes as a 'passing phase'.[76] But if one were to judge by the reaction of the Commissioners, the nationalists had not succeeded; in more than one instance the Commissioners wondered where all the traditional Buddhist-Hindu religious toleration had gone.[77] But the ultimate embarrassment to the nationalist leadership was to be in the evidence of Sir James Peiris, the "Father of the Reform Movement", and a Christian; his weighty opinion, which would have made all the difference for the nationalist case for self-government, had actually turned against the reformist case: 'after much anxious consideration' Sir

James asserted 'I have come to the conclusion that the country is not yet ripe for self-government'. The chief reason for his change of position was significant: he had concluded that communalism was a reality and that it was growing all the while; he spoke of the myth of the inpartiality of the Ceylonese elector, and added,

> 'I myself used the argument when I went before Lord Milner and I believed in it, but now I begin to doubt that there is much substance in it.... I must say that nationality does not in my opinion count so much in the matter of election as caste and religion. That is my view'.

Though Sir James was opposed to special Christian representation, he begged the Commission to tighten the Constitution against majority intolerance and mainly against majority religious intolerance.[79]

The Commissioners' comments revealed that they understood, and indeed sympathised with, the Christian dilemma; a Commissioner observed to a Catholic deputation:

> 'so that in effect, they really say if you keep the schools purely Catholic, then you cannot have a Government grant. If you admit other people into the schools you are trying proselytization?'[80]

Again, a Commissioner wondered whether 'this intolerance' is part of the 'attempt to arouse national spirit' - Christianity being 'associated with the power (Colonial)'.[81] No one, again, could miss the relevance of Dr. Shiels' comments during his talk on "Buddhism and Democracy" at the Y.M.B.A., in Colombo: he observed that 'so long as discontent with bad conditions was a divine discontent, and not merely personal or the result of envy and ungenerous feeling, so long would it be found to be in keeping with the spirit of all great world religions'.[82] The sum of the Commission's feelings on the religious tensions of the country seemed to be contained in a sincere hope:

> 'Will it be too much to hope that as a result of the sittings of the Commission, and the very frank ventilation of grievances and difficulties, some steps will be taken apart from anything which may result from the work of the Commission which will bring about the healing of that breach?'[83]

Indeed, the Commission did not offer anything more than this hope. The Report, when it did appear, was found to have, perhaps judiciously, avoided any direct reference to religion; the demand for religious representation of Christians had been ignored; and only a carefully-worded clause among the section

dealing with Reserved Bills revealed the Commissioners' concern about possible majority religious intolerance:

> 'any Bill whereby persons of any particular community or religion are made liable to any disabilities or restrictions to which persons of other communities or religions are not also subjected or made liable or are granted advantages not extended to persons of other communities or religions'.[84]

However, the Commission and its Report did not seem to be without their immediate impact on the trend of the anti-Christian campaign; while there was a general abatement of hostilities, a new attitude became evident in particular instances like the Report of the Education Commission. This Commission, which was set up in 1927 before the arrival of the Donoughmore Commission and mainly in response to the agitation of W.A. de Silva and S. Rajaratnam in the Legislative Council, reported in 1929;[85] the Report, which promised to be a largely anti-Christian document, turned out to be a very subdued one; though it contained a great deal of discussion on 'complex questions' like 'religious education' and 'denominational schools', it left the status quo very much undisturbed; the anti-Christian forces within the Commission had declared their hand only in the redrafting of the disputed 'conscience clause'; the old, 'negative' one, which was alleged to have been transgressed in Christian schools, was replaced by a new one, which claimed to be 'positive' and 'fool-proof'. The Report considered the existing Conscience Clause, introduced in 1920, as 'negative' because it 'allowed the teaching of one religion in a school to all its pupils provided the parent did not raise an objection to such teaching'. This seemed a fair assessment when one considers the old Conscience Clause.[86] However, the new version the Report suggested was claimed to be 'positive' because it required the 'written consent of the parent or guardian' in the 'matter of religious teaching'.[87] But it emerged from the Report that although the redrafting of the Conscience Clause was one important change which they achieved, the anti-Christian forces within the Commission had demanded more radical measures against the denominational schools. For instance, the Report spoke of the objection of some Members to the "permissive" attitude adopted by the

Government with respect to the teaching of religion; this was evidently a reference to the fact that in Government schools it was open to several religious denominations to look after the interests of their own pupils as they had what was known as the "right of entry" into such schools; whereas, in assisted schools there was no such "right of entry" and the religious teaching which took place was 'restricted to that of the denomination controlling such a school'. Here it is evident that the complaint went beyond the alleged transgression of the Conscience Clause. Their complaint seemed to suggest a sense of bitterness about their inability to have a say in the affairs of these schools; a situation made the more bitter perhaps by the fact that they were unable to prevent the flow of non-Christian children into these schools. The Christian Members of the Commission, on the other hand, would have opposed any move which they considered would lead to outside interference in their schools. There is reason to believe, therefore, that it was in this context that the anti-Christian element concentrated their attack on the issue of the Conscience Clause. In this sense the issue of the Conscience Clause could be considered the tip of an iceberg of bitterness and symbolised the deep opposition of the anti-Christian element in the country to the Christian school system as a whole.

The General Election of 1931 passed off without any serious religious incidents. This might have been partly due to the absence of elections in the Jaffna peninsula, where a majority of such incidents occurred during the elections of 1924. But it could be taken to indicate that religion as a potential political weapon had retreated to the background after the Donoughmore exercise. It was true too, that Christian representation fell in 1931 from 29.4 to 23.7 per cent. But this was still a high percentage of representation for Christians who made up only 9.9 per cent of the population of Ceylon. Even if the four vacant Jaffna seats had been filled by Hindus the percentage of Christian representation would still have been 21. This was perhaps another indication that religion had not played a

significant role in the elections.

Indeed, with many an emotive issue such as special Christian representation and a defective Conscience Clause out of the way and with a crucial election conducted in relative religious harmony, one could begin to believe that the Donoughmore Commission's hopes for religious harmony were being fulfilled; whether this was a lasting state only time would show.

NOTES

1. See Introduction.
2. See Chapter V: The Small Minorities.
3. This study, therefore, will mainly be confined to the Christian minority, and references to the Muslim minority will be made only when it is indispensable for historical connections.
4. The results of the 1921 elections were used by the Sinhalese nationalists in 1923 to demonstrate religious harmony in Ceylon, Memorandum of Ceylon Reform Deputation to the Secretary of State, 12 April 1923,Cmd.1906.
5. W. Ivor Jennings, "Race, Religion and Economic Opportunity in the University of Ceylon", University of Ceylon Review, II, 1-2 (November 1944), pp.1-13; and S.J. Tambiah, "Ethnic Representation in Ceylon's Higher Administrative Services", University of Ceylon Review, XIII, 2-3 (April and July 1955), pp.113-34.
6. The Report of the University Commission, C.O.54,896.
7. W. Ivor Jennings, loc.cit.
8. North to Earl Camden, 27 February 1805, C.O.54,17; and Edward Barnes to Earl Bathurst, 2 September 1828, C.O.54,86.
9. For a discussion on the influence of Missionary Organisations in the evolution of educational policy in Ceylon during the period 1840-1855 see K.M. de Silva, Social Policy and Missionary Organisations in Ceylon, 1840-1855, pp.142-185; for an assessment of the Buddhist reaction, in the post-Independence period (after 1948), to Christian predominance in education, see D.E. Smith, "Sinhalese Buddhist Revolution", in D.E.Smith (ed.), South Asian Politics and Religion, pp.453-509.
10. The Ceylon Blue Book for 1926, p. M5.
11. For various viewpoints see: J.E. Tennent, Christianity in Ceylon, pp.11 and 20; S.G. Perera, S.J., Historical Sketches, pp.144-172; M.D. Raghavan deals with the conversion of the Karawas to Christianity in The Karawa of Ceylon: Society and Culture, pp. 32-34.
12. The view that the Portuguese made conversions 'at the point of the sword', held mainly by Dr. G.P. Malalasekera (Pali Literature of Ceylon) and Dr. David Hussey (Ceylon and World History), was disputed by S.G. Perera, who argued that there was no historical evidence for the theory. The steadfastness of these converts (Roman Catholics) under a savage Dutch persecution - large numbers indeed underwent martyrdom - was a fact that actually weakened the theory of violence. Raghavan pointed out that there was no question of the sincerity of the converts and that they were even not 'backward in serving the later Sinhalese Kings who endeavoured to drive out the European foe', Raghavan, op.cit., p.33.
13. Raghavan, op.cit.
14. Colombo in the Low-country, which became the main port and the administrative capital, afforded a variety of trading and other entrepreneurial and employment opportunities.
15. Here, one would be tempted to apply to Ceylon theories linking religion with the rise of capitalism in Europe, particularly the well known Weberian ideas on the impact of the Protestant ethic. However, an

observer on the progress of the Karawas has pointed out the perils of any indiscriminate application of such theories in Ceylon; the small Protestant element was not observed to have demonstrated any marked superiority in entrepreneurship over the preponderant Christian group, the Roman Catholics. Michael Roberts, "The Rise of the Karawas", Ceylon Studies Seminar, 68/69 Series, No.5, mimeographed copy, 1969.

16. R.F. Gombrich, for instance, disputes the validity of the term "revival" for this mainly nationalistloriented agitation, see Richard F. Gombrich, Precept and Practice: Traditional Buddhism in the Rural Highlands of Ceylon, p.53.
17. A. Simon Silva, Are We Fit for Self-Government, (leaflet, 1927). D.C.W.S., Vol.VII.
18. Jaffna Catholic Diocesan Union to the Donoughmore Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.I.
19. Ibid.; said to have been expressed in support of the candidature of T.B. Saba Rutnam (Hindu) who contested the well-known Roman Catholic, H.A.P. Sandrasagara.
20. The League of Christian Citizenship to the D. Commission,D.C.W.S.,Vol.III.
21. K. Sivapatha Sundaram, Principal, Victoria College, was the author of this election pamphlet in Tamil;
22. Jaffna Catholic Diocesan Union to the D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.I.
23. The Ceylon Morning Leader, 6 November 1926.
24. D.P. Visithagama to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VII; the controversy conducted mainly in the vernacular publications like the Sinhala Jatiya, was to generate a great deal of unpleasantness,
25. C.I., 7 December 1926; and C.I., 14 October 1927.
26. C.I., 16 December 1927; and proceedings of the C.L.C., 12 March 1928.
27. This was an organisation of 'leading Hindus with the object of organising the Hindu community for religious and educational work and of defending the interests of the Hindus of Ceylon against the methods adopted by Christian Missionaries to destroy their faith', The Memorandum of the Saiva Paripalana Sabai, Jaffna, on Constitutional Reforms, (Pamphlet),p.1.
28. Rajaratnam's perhaps only real charge that 'Hindu girls in Jaffna were not allowed to join any Christian training school for teachers unless they become Christians' was shown to be a misrepresentation: there was only one missionary training school for girls in Jaffna - the Union Training College. In 1927, when the allegation was made, it had 3 Hindu girls; they contracted to teach for an agreed period in missionary schools - a provision that was borrowed from the Government Training College; and it was found that no Hindu girl who applied was asked to become a Christian, C.I., 1 March 1928.
29. Rev. Fr. M.J. Le Goc, Rector, St. Joseph's College, Colombo, C.I. 12 December 1927.
30. Based on The Ceylon Blue Book for 1926, Tables 4 and 5, p. M.5.
31. Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, during the Budget Debate in 1927, as reported in C.I., 22 July 1927.
32. C.I., 18 February 1927; C.I., 20 August 1927 (Special Correspondent); also M.H. Jayatilaka, address to Buddhist Protection Society, C.I., 7 February 1927.
33. H Dahanayake, C.I., 29 June 1927.
34. The Board of Education was constituted under the Education Ordinance No. 1 of 1920. The Members of the Board were nominated by the Governor. The Director of Education, the ex-officio Chairman, was to be responsible to the Board.
35. This was a body appointed by the Governor to work in conjunction with the Director of Education. In 1927, the Hindu Board of Education was enraged that a Tamil classic was withdrawn from a school syllabus allegedly because of the opposition of a missionary member of the Text Book Committee who had considered it to have 'indecent passages', C.I., 20 August 1927.

36. John M. Seneviratne, address to Congress of Sinhalese Literary Associations, C.I., 27 April 1927.
37. Sessional Paper XXXIII, 1926; see also Sessional Paper XX, 1924 and Proceedings of C.L.C., 29 January 1925 and 7 July 1927.
38. S. Rajaratnam, submission made to the Sub-Committee enquiring into Allocation of Building Grants cited by him in his memorandum to the D. Commission, 8 January 1928, in D.C.W.S., Vol.VI; see also C.L.C. 7 July 1927.
39. The Select Committee's composition: The Director of Education (Chairman) D.B. Jayatilaka, C.W.W. Kannangara, E.R. Tambimutthu, A. Mahadeva and T.B. Jayah, see proceedings of C.L.C., 7 July 1927,and 14 July 1927, and 17 August 1927.
40. Ibid., Rajaratnam was responsible for a number of motions regarding education; a synopsis of these motions and the Administration's reactions to these is in Rajaratnam to the D. Commission,D.C.W.S.,Vol.VI.
41. O.G.D. Alwis, address, public meeting at Kalutara, in C.I. 11 August 1927.
42. M.J. Le Goc, C.I., 14 July 1927.
43. Public meeting at Batticoloa, in C.I., 3 September 1927.
44. C.I., editorial, 19 March 1927.
45. C.I., editorial, 26 November 1927.
46. C.I., 25 January 1928.
47. Rev. Fr. T.M.F. Long, Rector, St. Patrick's College, Jaffna, C.I., 18 January 1928; see also C.I., 12 May 1928.
48. C.I., editorial, 19 November 1926.
49. J.D. de Lanerolle, C.I., 28 December 1926.
50. Mahatma Gandhi, address in Jaffna, C.I., 1 December 1927.
51. Clifford to the Secretary of State, 20 November 1926, C.O.537,692.
52. W.A. de Silva was elected the Urban Member for Kandy in the Legislative Council elections of 1924, but contested the predominantly Karawa seat of Moratuwa in the Low-Country in the elections of 1931.
53. The Galle Vernacular Teachers' Association was to complain to the D. Commission that the Government favoured the Christian schools; this was a measure of its mood, the Association to the D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VII.
54. C.I., editorial, 30 June 1928.
55. Ibid.
56. Geo A.F. Senaratne, C.I., 28 June 1928.
57. C.W.W.Kannangara, in S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike (ed.), The Handbook of the Ceylon National Congress, 1919-1928, p.743, G.K.W. Perera, C.I., 15 Bebruary 1927; and S. Rajaratnam to D. Commission, D.C.W.S.,Vol.VI.
58. D.S. Senanayake, during Buddhist Educational Conference, C.I., 5 January 1927; Senanayake was to become the first Prime Minister in Independent Ceylon.
59. Significantly, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, who was to become a Prime Minister in the first decade of Independence, was silent on the issue of Christian schools during this period.
60. Ceylon Daily News, 21 September 1927.
61. The Rights and Claims of the Kandyan People (pamphlet), p.33. This pamphlet was prepared by the Kandyan National Assembly to be presented to the Donoughmore Commission.
62. Clifford, loc.cit.
63. C.I., article, "Religiosity: Spurious Religion, Counterfeit Religion". 27 January 1928.
64. Rev. Dr. Isaac Tambiah, address, Jaffna Historical Association, C.I., 18 June 1928.
65. C.I., editorial, 8 December 1927.
66. Rule 3: object of the League, in C.I., 2 September 1927.
67. A.L.J. Croos da Brera, Christian Representation in the Legislative Council, (pamphlet), p.4.

68. The Unionist Society to the D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VII., Jaffna Catholic Diocesan Union to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.I.
69. The Unionist Society to D. Commission, loc.cit.; and evidence of Lawrie Muthukrishna before D. Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.III, p.56.
70. League of Christian Citizenship - an association of Jaffna Christians, mainly Protestants, led by Nevins Selvadurai, Dr. Isaac Thambiah and J.W. Chelliah, whose involvement in education in the North had attracted strong Hindu opposition - in evidence before the D. Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.III, p.152.
71. Ibid.
72. A.L.J.Croos da Brera, op.cit., pp.1-3; and evidence before D.Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.III, p.67; D.C. Anktell,to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.I.
73. Because of the special problems in Jaffna, the Bishop of Jaffna was not opposed to representation (see evidence of Jaffna Catholic Diocesan Union, D.C.O.S., Vol.III, p.160 ff.). The other Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church seemed to have opposed the move.
74. The Ceylon Catholic Messenger, 12 August 1927.
75. Nathan Papers; though the correspondence regarding the visit is available, Sir Matthew's notes do not indicate the nature of the discussion with the Archbishop.
76. D.S. Senanayake to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VII.
77. See evidence of Lawrie Muthukrishna, D.C.O.S., Vol.III, and evidence of League of Christian Citizenship, D.C.O.S., Vol.III.
78. Sir James Peiris, to D. Commission, D.C.W.S., Vol.VI.
79. Sir James Peiris, evidence before D. Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.IV,p.225 ff.
80. During evidence of The Catholic Union of Ceylon, D.C.O.S., Vol.III, pp. 37-44.
81. Ibid.
82. Dr. Shiels, address, reported in C.I., 11 January 1928.
83. Dr. Shiels during the evidence of League of Christian Citizenship, D.C.O.S., Vol.III, p.159.
84. D.C.R., p.74, Clause 10(a).
85. Report of the Commission to Inquire into and Report upon the Present System of Education in Ceylon,The Ceylon Sessional Paper XXVIII, 1929; composition: L.McD. Robison (Act. Director of Education and Chairman), Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, W.Duraiswamy,C.W.W.Kannangara,A.Canagaratnam, T.B.Jayah, D.B.Jayatilaka, G.A.H.Wille, W.A.de Silva, P.B.Rambukwelle, P.de S.Kularatne, Rev.John Bicknell and Rev.Fr. John B.Meary.
86. The Relevant section of the old Conscience Clause read:
    A. No applicant shall be refused admission into any assisted school on account of the religion, nationality, caste or language of such applicants or of either of his parents.
    B. 1) It shall not be required as a condition of any child being admitted into or continuing in an assisted school that he shall attend or abstain from attending any Sunday school or any place of religious worship or that he shall attend any religious observance or any instruction in religious subjects in the school or elsewhere, from which observance or instruction he may be withdrawn by his parents or guardian, or that he shall attend the school on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs.
87. The new version of the Conscience Clause read:
    I. It shall not be required as a condition of any child being admitted into or continuing in school that he shall attend or abstain from attending any Sunday School or any place of religious worship or that he shall attend any religious observance or any instruction in religious subjects in the school or elsewhere.
    II. No child belonging to a religious denomination other than that to which the managing body of that school belongs shall be required to attend or abstain from attending any Sunday School or any place of religious worship or to attend any religious observance or any religious

instruction in religious subjects in the school or elsewhere unless the parent or guardian of the child has expressly stated in writing his consent that his child shall attend such a place of religious worship or receive instruction in religious subjects in the school.

III. No child shall be required to attend school on any day exclusively set apart for religious observances by the religious body to which the parent belongs.

CONCLUSION

What becomes increasingly clear even during a casual review of the minority problems in Ceylon is their close relationship with the emergence of the new elite. Minority problems in Ceylon appeared to have developed in the wake of elite movements like the national and religious revivals.

The Buddhist revival among the Sinhalese and the Hindu revival among the Tamils in the first few decades of the twentieth century seemed to have largely elite backgrounds. No doubt the growth of national feeling in a Colonial situation entailed a search for a history, and a revival of religions which formed part of that history was inevitable. Again, there could have been a genuine desire among adherents of those religions for a true revival. Although the leadership of the earlier phase of the Buddhist revival, in the 1870's,was drawn from a number of castes, it is significant that the new phase of the movement was led mainly by the Low-country Goyigamas during a period of Karawa ascendancy; and the Karawas were mainly Christians whose economic and educational superiority was undoubted. In fact, the periodof the revival marked the downward trend in Karawa fortunes, One could therefore raise the question of Goyigama elite motives behind the revival. There was also a possible ethnic angle to the revival. It could be argued, for instance, that there was a connection between Sinhalese-Buddhist, particularly Sinhalese-Goyigama-Buddhist, elite involvement in the revival and the over-representation of the Tamils and the Burghers in the public services. Indeed, this angle acquired greater credibility due to the fact that the Sinhalese-Buddhist elite began to gain lost ground during the period of the revival.

It was also significant that the Hindu revival in the North led by the Hindu-Vellalas coincided with a period of Christian ascendancy there. In 1921, for instance, virtually all the Tamil Councillors were Christians. 1924, however, witnessed the stepping-up of the revival and the replacement

of the Christian by Hindu Councillors. The revivals were, therefore, not only divisive of elites in the country generally but also of elite within their own communities.

Similar divisions were to follow in the wake of the nationalist movement in the early twentieth century. True, the first stirrings of nationalism marked a phase of elite unity. But their demands for greater political participation and the Ceylonisation of the services suggested that their unity was based mainly on their common political and economic grievances against the British system. Hence it was a fragile unity.

Indeed, at the actual concession of reforms, communal cracks began to appear. McCallum's concession of a special electorate to the Burghers in 1912 marked the beginning of division in the united elite camp; after the reforms the Burghers began their withdrawal from the reform movement. The Burgher attitude seemed to be based on political and economic calculation: politically, the fear of submersion in territorial electorates which the united elite demanded; and economically, the fear of loss of their present economic position in the event of increased Ceylonisation of the services. Besides, the reforms fulfilled their political hopes.

In the next instalment of reforms in 1920 a non-official majority was conceded. And here began the struggle within the elite groups for the spoils won from the British through the reforms. At this stage political representation became the source of contention; and this for at least three reasons: first, representation was considered an index of the political strength of the groups; second, the groups were anxious to have a share in the shaping of economic policy, a function which the Legislative Council was increasingly acquiring; and third, individual representatives were thought to be able to influence appointments in the services. Here again conflict was inevitable because the groups were numerically unequal and were at different stages of development. The Low-country Sinhalese elite who were recruited from the more advanced castes urged territorial representation because

they, with their numerical superiority, were assured greater representation in a territorial scheme. The Tamils and Burghers advocated communal electorates because they were anxious to safeguard the proportion of representation they enjoyed and which they feared would be lost in a territorial scheme because of their numerical minority situation. The Kandyans, Indians and Muslims advocated communal representation because they were both numerically inferior and backward economically and educationally.

This period witnessed the spread of the communal conflict to the communities generally. Earlier, latent feelings of race, caste and religion among the mass of the people had not amounted to conflict because the new economic, social and political forces had not operated among them as much as with the elite. Now, to reinforce their own struggles, the elite were seeking the aid of their respective communities. Communal electorates provided in the reforms enabled the acceleration of this percolation of feeling from the elite to the mass of the people. In this sense, the reforms tended to widen the communal cracks into a chasm.

Manning in 1923 found what he thought to be a solution to the elite conflict when he extended the communal system of representation and offered disproportionate representation to the minorities to achieve what he termed 'balance of power'. His solution was, therefore, to place the communities in water'tight compartments in order to avoid conflicts. However, in his obsession with communal balancing in the Legislature, Manning had apparently been inattentive to the other aspects of the Constitution. In creating a non-official majority without responsibility he had actually created a monstrosity. In other words, Manning had failed to reckon with the power motive behind elite demands for representation; he had failed to understand also the potential for elite unity in a Colonial situation. The elite, bereft of responsibility, had in the meanwhile formed themselves into an unofficial opposition against the real repositories of power - Governor and the officials.

It was at this stage that the Donoughmore Commission was appointed. They

were required to seek a solution to the constitutional problem arising out of the divorce of power from responsibility in the Constitution of 1924. The Commissioners were soon to discover that the constitutional problem was so tied up with the communal problem - which was, after all, the political form of the minority problem - that there was no possible solution to the one without a remedy for the other.

The resolution of the constitutional problem was, in itself, a tough enough proposition. Here, they knew, a solution hung on a clear definition of Britain's intentions for the future political status of the Island as a whole: was it or was it not the British Government's intention to lead the Island on the path of self-government? Until their arrival this question had never really been thought out to a conclusion. If attitudes, however, were to be interpreted, the answer had been in the negative. It was obvious that the reforms until 1924 had been a series of mere palliatives: for, the Government's decision, even in 1924, to reserve the portfolios in the hand s of the British officials and to deny the non-official majority ~~of~~ any executive power was undoubtedly based on a firm intention to retain power in the governance of Ceylon.

In recommending reforms for the resolution of the constitutional crisis, they were therefore confronted with a choice of two courses - either of going forward or of going back. They could not, however, justifiably think of going back for a number of reasons: for one thing, no responsible group or person - European or Ceylonese - recommended a return to the past or the suppression of liberties already granted; for another, they themselves observed the very unreasonableness of such a move, for,

> 'apart from the well-recognised difficulty of taking back power once given, it would not seem the policy of justice or of statesmanship to have recourse to such a step unless or until the inhabitants of Ceylon had manifestly failed to avail themselves of a chance of successfully managing their own affairs under conditions, which unlike those at present obtaining, gave them a fair opportunity of doing so with success.'

On the other hand, two other extrinsic factors had made it well nigh

impossible for them to contemplate going back: first, Britain had, in 1917, declared its intentions for nearby India as eventual 'responsible government'.[1] And second, Hugh Clifford, to the utter embarrassment of the Colonial Office and the Commissioners had depicted the Commission as the final arbiter of Ceylonese hopes in the matter of self-government; and had raised hopes of 'self-government tomorrow'.

The obvious course for the Commissioners was therefore the one of going forward, that is, to lead the country on the road to self-government. And they chose this. Choosing this course, however, entailed a decision to face the almost insurmountable barrier of a communal problem; which was in essence the problem of securing the political rights of minority - ethnic, religious and caste - communities under a system of representative government. At the very outset, therefore, it became evident to the Commissioners that the constitutional problem they had to untangle was essentially the problem of reconciling the claims of the minorities for an adequate voice in the conduct of affairs with the obvious fact that the constitution must ensure for the majority that proportionate share in all spheres of government activity to which their numbers and influence entitled them. In the final analysis, therefore, the solution to this problem had to be, and indeed was, the meaning and purpose of the whole Donoughmore exercise. Their answer was invested with a deeper significance because Ceylon was not the only country where such a problem existed - India and Ireland, for instance, faced similar problems - and because constitutional theorists awaited their deliberations with deep interest.

The Commissioners diagnosed the country's real malaise to be communalism and its cause to be mainly the failure of the experiment of communal representation, which they condemned in no uncertain terms. There was, of course, nothing new in this analysis, since some ten years previously Edwin Montagu and Lord Chelmsford had arrived at similar conclusions concerning such problems in India.[2] But unlike the Indian reformers Lord Donoughmore and his

colleagues drew the logical conclusion when they recommended the abolition of communal representation because the system was 'admittedly undesirable' and only by its abolition would it be possible for the various communities 'to develop together a true national unity'.

A number of significant factors supported their decision to do away with communal representation: in Ceylon they found that the communal system had 'no great antiquity to commend it'; the evidence presented during the sessions did not convince the Commissioners that the minorities in Ceylon were in real danger of oppression; and that such rampant communalism as existed in Ceylon was more a condition of the emergent elites of those communities than of the communities themselves. The Commissioners' analysis showed that the minority problem in Ceylon had none of the massive proportions of that of India and provided the reasons why they were able to achieve in Ceylon what was well nigh impossible in India. The last factor about elite communalism calls for comment.

Although not explicit in the Report, their views of the elite would have been evident to anyone who examined the reactions of the Commissioners during the sessions. On more than one occasion they noted how 'prestige' was a major factor in the cry for representation.[3] The Commissioners also concluded that the social, economic and political uplift of the less-privileged took second place in the thinking of the elite; indeed they discovered that communal representation with a franchise restricted to about four per cent of the population was preferable to them than universal franchise, the reason being mainly their fear of the reactions of the 'depressed classes'. A conversation between Sir Geoffrey Butler and the Tamil Executive Councillor, K. Balasingham, was very revealing:

Sir Geoffrey: I do not quite see myself why the present form of franchise a narrow restricted franchise, which means a weak electorate, is necessarily more likely to endear itself to the House than a larger electorate?

Balasingham: Today the voters have some stake in the country. With manhood suffrage, a very large number of people whose grievances have been dormant all this time but which could be made to appear very great by interested parties will enter the field.

Q. Yes I see that point now.

A. One does not know where it may lead to. I believe, for twenty centuries they have been content with their lot. For instance, the depressed classes, who have not felt that they were oppressed by their masters may now rise and make things very undersirable generally with the manhood vote. I do not say these things are going to happen but let us go stage by stage.

Q. Does not all your scheme rather assume that we have to go joggling along on the old way and do nothing? If anything is brought out by this inquiry it is that there are a tremendous lot of practical things that want to be done in Ceylon, and everybody is interested in inventing a constitution which is going to continue to do nothing but we must try to invent a constitution which is going to try to do something.

A. Yes, but why assume that nothing is going to be done?

Q. You are taking the old eighteenth century idea of checks and balances; you do not want to give too much power to one section, but to balance the different sections so that you get a kind of stability which was useful in an age when there were tyrants about trying to oppress the people. The only tyrants now are bad housing, bad drainage, and various other things which we have seen scattered about in Ceylon, and your nice compact little scheme will leave everything as it is, but, until you do something, everybody will go to sleep under your constitution; that is my idea.

A. I do not think that is a proper estimate of the work that has been done by the Council.[4]

The Commissioners' conversations with the elite also revealed that ~~their~~ economic motives were behind the cry for representation. This became evident in a conversation between Sir Geoffrey Butler and Sir Marcus Fernando:

Sir Geoffrey: It may be possible to abolish communal representation in the Lower House and confine it to territorial representation, but have communal representation in the Upper House. How does that strike you?

Sir Marcus: The communal people in this country will not accept that for the simple reason that most of these communal representatives are interested in the Budget in allocations of money. They will consider that more important than even an opportunity of representation in the Second Chamber.[5]

Did the Commissioners then underestimate the problem of communalism when they considered it to be virtually a condition of the elite? Even so, could they ignore the reality of elite tensions or the possibility that, given time and opportunity and the ambitions of the elite, these apprehensions would percolate into the very heart of the communities? Could they again ignore the real danger of eventual majority domination when they considered the experience of other countries where such optimism had not been realistic? They could not have missed the message either: the minority elites without exception and the minority-oriented newspapers -especiallythe Times of Ceylon and the Ceylon Independent[6] never ceased to emphasise the risks involved in

general electorates and the British type of parliamentary government in a country such as Ceylon. The Ceylon Independent, no doubt for the information of the Commissioners, spoke of these fears:

> 'democratic institutions without any modification in a community still under the influence of tribal ideas are bound to result in the political effacement of the minority communities....It is important to realise that there is no analogy between majority rule in countries where the population is homogeneous and that in a place like India or Ceylon. There the minorities present certain political convictions or economic theories and may someday become the majority. In the latter, on the other hand, the minorities are divided along racial and communal lines and live in water-tight compartments....It is futile to attempt to win over the sympathy or support of one section to the other, for the differences which have kept them apart and aloof for ages do not belong to the province of argument or persuasion. They do not want a state of permanent subordination.'[7]

The sessions and the Report revealed that the Commissioners were only too aware of the danger of ignoring the communal condition in Ceylon. But their view seemed to be that the problem in Ceylon was not an insurmountable barrier on the path to responsible government; and that minority tensions would be eased if their main causes could be uprooted and if a number of safeguards for the protection of the minorities were to be introduced. In other words, their initial choice of pushing the Island on the path of responsible government had, in their eyes, necessitated the difficult decision of the abolition of communal representation from the sphere of Ceylon's politics.

They recommended some long-term and short-term safeguards. The Commissioners believed that the best long-term safeguard lay in what they called the 'consolidation of the people into a single territorial electorate,' based on universal suffrage. Although they recognised that for a time some 'fear and distrust' would remain among the minorities who were used to a communal pattern, it was their firm belief that the territorial principle would 'ultimately militate against' voting on narrow communal lines. Here their optimism was unmistakeable. They had of course two reasons for this move: firstly, the electors - mainly the underprivileged minorities such as the depressed classes - would then be placed 'in a better position to obtain redress for their grievances and will gain a new status and self-respect as possessing one of the highest privileges of citizenship;' and secondly,

the elected representatives would be induced to take a more active interest in social welfare instead of occupying themselves exclusively with politics. In other words, the Commissioners felt that universal suffrage was the best way of inducing the elite to take an active interest in the welfare of all, while their activity of nursing the electorates would engage them in social welfare, giving them less time and opportunity for communal politics. Here obviously the message of the caste minorities had touched them deeply: neither the Government nor even the enlightened political elite were interested in the welfare of the caste minorities. So here was in effect a snub to the Administration and the elite: to the Administration for its failure to eradicate the evils of the caste system for over a century, and to the elite who argued that universal franchise must await social change. Here the Commissioners dramatised the plight of the depressed classes, especially when they drew attention to the fact that this problem was greatly responsible for their decision to recommend universal adult franchise.

The abolition of communal representation and the introduction of universal suffrage were their long-term proposals to deal with the communal problem. However, they were aware of the danger that in the short-term sectional prejudices might prevent minorities from obtaining adequate representation; indeed they were aware of the danger that communal politics could thrive under adult suffrage and even become entrenched with mass support. They sought for some devices to avoid such an eventuality.

One such device was their recommendation of 'readjustment and redistribution of territorial seats so as to assist the representation of minorities; areas with considerable concentration of particular races and religions, who have often been 'swamped' in the elections due to the existing arrangement of the electorates, could, they observed, be made smaller to help these groups. They recommended the appointment of a local commission to attempt this task.

Their recommendation of a committee system of government - the seven

committees with executive powers into which the new State Council was to be divided, electing chairmen who would be Ministers presiding over departments - was one of the safeguards intended by them to reduce minority apprehensions. They thought that the arrangement would make it possible, though they recognised that it by no means ensured, that the Board of Ministers might be composite, containing representatives of different communities. They also hoped that the Committees would provide an opportunity for members of minority communities to know what was going on and secure publicity for any actions of Ministers.

Then again, a clear indication of their appreciation of minority fears was in the recommendation they made for the appointment of twelve non-official members to be made by the Governor after each election so that he may be 'able to use these nominations to make the State Council more generally representative of the national interests.' It was also in the context of the minorities that their recommendations for the enhanced powers of the Governor could be viewed. Wide powers were concentrated in the hands of the Governor: the power of certification; the power to summon the Council at any time, to address it and to dissolve it; and the power to defer approval of Bills for a period, refer them back for further consideration, to insist on a two-thirds majority in respect of Bills involving an important question of principle. Such powers were no doubt regarded by the Commissioners as necessary to safeguard minority interests.

We could now turn to the task of assessing the relevance of the Commission's recommendations to minority questions in Ceylon. This could, perhaps, best be done by considering the three main pillars of the Donoughmore scheme - adult franchise, non-communal representation and the Committee System of Government.

We consider adult franchise first. Being the numerical majority, the Low-country Sinhalese-Buddhist group, particularly the Goyigamas, had reason to be pleased. True they had not asked for it. But now that it was offered they welcomed it. The first reaction of a Congress nationalist, C.E.

Bulathsinhala, who called himself a 'swarajist', spoke much: he felt 'inclined to hug the Commissioners.'[8] Only the worry of the extension of the Indian vote dampened their enthusiasm. However, the minority elite, mainly of the ethnic groups, could not be expected exactly to welcome the new proposal. It was understandable that they who were also munerically weaker resented a move that would eventually place the majority in a position of dominance. Some of these minorities had greater reason for resentment over the loss of the existing system of restricted franchise: the Tamils and the Burghers, for example, who would have been better off, being proportionately more literate than the rest, were bound to be bitter; the Tamil Vellala elite had a further reason for fear in the vote of the depressed classes. The Burghers and Muslims, again, who were tiny minorities scattered among the larger communities, had greater reason for resentment because universal suffrage virtually removed any chance of their being elected. The Kandyans feared the concentration of Tamil votes in their midst.

The move, in fact, left the minorities in an embarrassing position: the majority could welcome the move as a landmark in their struggle for freedom from the yoke of the foreigner, and as one that would make the people the masters of their own house. Indeed, they could pose as the champions of a cause fought and won. The minorities did not have this advantage. If they opposed the move on grounds of uncomfortable facts and reasons of self-preservation, they could be represented as reactionary and as betraying the country's highest interests. In this sense the Commissioners added to the tensions of the minorities by placing them in a greater dilemma.

It was true that the proposal was qualified by the Commissioners' fervent hope of majority goodwill to minorities. Indeed, the Commissioners seemed to have considered universal suffrage as a testing ground, promising self-government only in the event of the majority's fairness and justice to the smaller groups; they observed of self-government that:

> 'such a development will only be possible if under a new constitution the members of the larger communities so conduct themselves in the

> reformed Council as to inspire universal confidence in their desire to harmonise conflicting interests and to act justly, even at a sacrifice to themselves.'

But no one could deny that, whatever the hopes of the Commissioners, the move was a step in the direction of majority rule.

We could now consider the second major recommendation of the Report - the abolition of communal representation. Here too the majority had reason to be overjoyed. Indeed, this was what they, led by the Ceylon National Congress, had demanded of the Commissioners in the first place. The minorities, on the other hand, were deeply disappointed by the move. They had reason to be. In the existing Legislative Council they had enjoyed, man for man, greater voting strength than the Sinhalese. It was, therefore, only natural that they resented the inevitable change of position which the abolition of communal representation would bring. The general apprehension must have become the more poignant with the added bitterness of minority elite leaders who had looked to communal electorates to convert their social influence within their communities into political power. The bitterness particularly of the smaller minorities - Muslims and Burghers - becomes more than understandable when we realise their new situation: they were threatened with virtual political extinction. In their case, not even the soothing balm of nominations by the Governor could hope to satisfy them: if for no other reason, the Governor's nominee may not even be acceptable to the communities themselves, and perhaps be suspect, being the 'Governor's man'.

Did the Commissioners, then, let down the minorities? The minorities thought so and said so; they had a number of good reasons on their side; one reason adduced by them was that the Commissioners had been deeply misled; they contended that any elimination of communalism by the abolition of communal representation was bound to be formal, since any territorial scheme in Ceylon was virtually communal, given the communal nature of Ceylonese society. This assertion was of course basically true. For example, if one were to go by experience, a Tamil would hardly have a chance of being elected in a Sinhalese area and a Sinhalese would be similarly placed in a predominantly Tamil

area, whether the electorate was territorial or not. In this sense the minorities could very well say that the substitution of territorial for communal electorates was a mere label-changing exercise. On the other hand, the system of nomination was argued to be a form of 'veiled communal representation' - the only difference being that communal representatives were nominated instead of being elected; so why should one communal system be substituted for another? This argument, of course, gathered strength from an obvious motive for the introduction of nomination - raising also the question of the credibility of the Commissioners. By their own admission in the Report, nomination was said to be a device calculated to ensure the representation of the European community in Ceylon; they had admitted that if

> 'communal representation is to be eliminated in the new constitution, it might seem an invidious distinction if European seats were retained on the old basis. We therefore have to devise a scheme which will meet the case of the Europeans and serve the country generally, and which, without restoring communal representation in another form, will help to make the Legislative Council more representative...'

These minority arguments were no doubt valuable if taken in isolation. But the conclusions which the minorities drew from them do not seem to be warranted in the context of the Commissioners' long-term hopes for the elimination of communalism in Ceylon. For one thing, the Commissioners' contention that communal representation as long as it endures would hinder the political development of the country seemed reasonable; because it was evident that the continuation of the system of communal representation entailed the continuation of an external authority to regulate the system. For another, the Commissioners had never denied the fact that nomination was communal; but their argument for nomination was that it was easier to dispose of it than communal representation and it was one more step in the struggle against communalism in Ceylon. Indeed, the Commissioners made it clear in the Report that nomination was a temporary arrangement in order to 'make the Legislative Council more representative during the time of adjustment to the altered conditions following the grant of the new Constitution'. This also seemed a good enough argument given the task of the Commissioners and their desire

to lead the country on the path of responsible government.

The third important recommendation that has to be considered is the committee system. Here, while we do not attempt to examine the very serious constitutional objections to the system which were, and could be offered, because they do not concern us directly, we may consider some aspect of it which have a bearing on the minority issues. Obviously, the concern over the minority question was very much in their minds when the Commissioners settled on their unique committee system of government - based on the constitution of the London County Council - for Ceylon's new constitution. Throughout the sessions the Commissioners had to grapple with the central argument of the minorities: was communalism the ultimate evil that it had been depicted to be, or had it become an unacceptable philosophy because it existed amidst a parliamentary system of democracy? In other words, should not the Commissioners think on some new lines in keeping with the special conditions existing in Ceylon? For instance, a minority spokesman warned that

> 'it is not statesmanlike or wise to ignore the existence of the communal spirit and legislate as though no such thing existed.... I am convinced that the denial of citizenship to a section of the people is a greater evil. I am compelled much against my wish to choose the lesser of the two evils. It is not justice but birthright that minorities demand'.[9]

It became evidence that this argument had made its impact on the minds of the Commissioners during the very sessions. Even Shiels, who more than the others raged against communalism during the earlier period of the sessions, seemed to have mellowed later. Significantly, a few days before the Commission's departure, Shiels noted about communalism during a secret session:

> 'I do not think it is necessary or desirable it should disappear. There may be important contributions the different communities can give from their own point of view. I do not think it desirable, but what we want is that the interests of the country should always be put first and the interests of the community second. That is rather a different thing than suggesting the elimination of communal feeling altogether'.[10]

Probably shaken by the minority arguments, and evidently because of their own doubts about the British system, which they were not anxious to 'yoke' on to the Ceylonese, being 'possibly already obsolescent'[11], they decided to explore new possibilities. The Committee System was what they discovered.

But their attempt to avoid one obstacle seems to have ensnared them in another: the system was said to contain elements that would act as serious obstacles in the eradication of communalism which the Commissioners themselves were trying to achieve. The argument ran thus: the growth of a healthy party system based on economic and ideological principles was the only solution to the communal problem; but the Committee System did not encourage the development of team work which finds its natural expression in a party system; it even discouraged the development of parties; the Committee System would therefore perpetuate communalism.

This was a serious objection. It is difficult indeed to see where responsibility resided under the scheme. The Commissioners insisted that the Ministers would only be 'individually responsible for the administration of the Departments assigned to their charge' (italics introduced). Even the Board of Ministers, the only element in the system with some semblance of unity, was so constituted that there was barely any uniting force within it. Here again the Commissioners emphasised the several responsibility of the Ministers; they recommended that, with the exception of the presentation of the Annual Budget and Estimates and Supplementary Estimates, 'the individual and representative responsibility of the Ministers would be maintained'. There was also a great deal of emphasis on the autonomy of committees in the scheme. The Round Table which was a severe critic of the Committee System, argued thus against the Commissioners' reasoning:

> 'their line of reasoning, if it is permissible to paraphrase their words, is "There is no sign of team work in Ceylon today - that is of a kind not based on caste, race or religion - and there is no likelihood of its developing at present. So be it: let us give her a Constitution which does not need it". A Constitution has, accordingly, been selected which seems of all others the least likely to result in such a development'.[12]

In fact, this view was echoed by the Colonial Office too. Commenting on the views of Governor Stanley on the Scheme, Sir S. Wilson, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, noted:

> 'the Governor takes the view that the only solution is the gradual formation of political parties which I believe was the one thing that the Donoughmore Commission wanted to avoid: in as far as this could probably only come about on a racial basis'.[13]

The voting on the acceptability of the Report in the Legislative Council in

December 1929, after months of acrimonious discussion, was a close one - nineteen for and seventeen against. The 19 "acceptionists" were: 13 Sinhalese (Low-country and Kandyan), 4 Europeans, 1 Tamil and 1 Burgher. The 17 "rejectionists" were: 8 Tamils, 3 Muslims, 2 Burghers, 2 Indians and 2 Low-country Sinhalese. The political analysts of the day assessed that the absence of anti-racial feeling in the voting was more apparent than real. With the exception of the Europeans, the voting was said to be on majority-minority lines; the few exceptions were explained away in terms of mainly 'personal considerations'. The two Sinhalese who voted with the minority groups - E.W.Perera and C.W.W.Kannangara - held strong views on what they called the Report's'inherent defects',which was obviously a way of describing their deep antagonism to the extension of the franchise to the Indians. Even the 'Stanley modifications' of the original proposals on this issue had not satisfied them. There were explanations too for the behaviour of the Tamil and the Burgher who voted with the Sinhalese for acceptability. The Tamil, E.R. Tambimutthu, represented the isolated Tamil community in the South-East of the Island, a community having little in common with the main Tamil territory in the North. He had rarely seen eye to eye with his Tamil colleagues in the North and was considered a 'close friend of the leading Sinhalese'. His action, therefore, was said to be 'not very surprising'. The Burgher, N.J.Martin, on the other hand, was a large estate owner in a predominantly Sinhalese coastal province in the North-West of the Island. It was probably that he chose to rely on the vast influence he could wield, under the new Constitution, in a territorial electorate. He had evidently no fear of disappointing his community by his action because in the absence of communal electorates he would not have to solicit its support any more.

Indeed, this view of majority-minority polarisation in the voting was confirmed by the behaviour of some of the leading Sinhalese politicians in the Ceylon National Congress. E.W. Perera joined with T.B.Jayah (Muslim) and W. Duraiswamy (Tamil) to complain to the Secretary of State that the

> 'cry was raised that rejection would mean the downfall of Sinhalese predominance over the Tamils and the minority communities and those who opposed the scheme were traitors to the country and were betray-

ing the Sinhalese.' 'Mr. George E. de Silva, the President-Elect of the Ceylon National Congress speaking in favour of acceptance of the Scheme at the Lanka Mahajana Sabha on 30 November 1929.'

In support of their complaint the memorialists cited a news report in the Ceylon Daily News of an address by George E. de Silva, the President-Elect of the Ceylon National Congress, to the Lanka Mahajana on the 30 November 1929:

> 'In conclusion Mr. de Silva said that he would ask them to persuade Mr. Kannangara and Mr. E.W. Perera if they had any Sinhalese blood in them to work along with other Sinhalese leaders. If they were Sinhalese they should work with the other Sinhalese and walk with them in the paths that the majority selected. He prayed and asked them also to pray, that Mr. Kannangara and Mr. Perera may see light'.

This plea, they added 'was raised by the very party who always attributed communal feeling to the minority communities'.[14]

The European voting behaviour has yet to be explained. Here, what the correspondent of The Times reported to his British readers seemed a fair assessment:

> 'it is difficult to find any reason for the European attitude except a belief in the insubstantial nature of the supposed extension of popular control in the central Government, whatever may happen in the constituencies, hedged around as it is with safeguards. European election to the new Council will depend entirely on the connivance of the majority leaders....Perhaps the European attitude may be described as a submission to the inevitable'.[15]

The validity of the criticisms and analyses of those sections of the Report which deal specifically with the minorities may best be assessed by a survey of the fortunes of the minorities at the elections and of the immediate impact of the recommendations - mainly the abolition of communal representation, the committee system and universal suffrage - on the minority situations.

The first elections for the new State Council were held in June 1931. They resulted in the return of 38 Sinhalese (28 Low-country and 10 Kandyan), 3 Tamils, 2 Indians, 2 Europeans and 1 Muslim. The small representation of the Tamils was due to the boycott of the elections, mainly as a protest against the abolititon of communal representation and four seats in Jaffna

were not filled. To fill the nominated seats the Governor appointed four Europeans, two Burghers, one Muslim and one Indian. The results made it obvious that the majority community had been placed in power as an inevitable result of the adoption of purely territorial representation. Although the position of the Indians remained unchanged, the Muslims lost two of their elected representatives and the Burghers all theirs; and this in spite of the fact that the Council had been enlarged in the new scheme. Representation-wise the new scheme had not helped the minorities; in fact, their condition had deteriorated. In the second general election held under the scheme, in 1936, the representation of the communities remained practically the same - 39 Sinhalese (31 Low-country and 8 Kandyan), 8 Tamils, 2 Indians and 1 European.

As for an assessment of the impact of the recommendations on the minority situation, we can find no better than the one made by the Soulbury Commission.[16] Fifteen years and two Council sessions later, in 1945, it attempted this task. As for the abolition of communal and the adoption of territorial representation, the Commissioners agreed that the move had tended to ensure numerical representation; and in the light of results, the recommendations of the Donoughmore Commissioners had 'pressed too hardly upon the minorities'. They even agreed that, on analysis, it was the proposal to abolish communal representation that had caused the greatest pain of mind to the minorities; and that the move might have even brought out into the open underlying and deep seated communal dissension. But they were not prepared to agree with the minority contention that the Donoughmore moves 'originated' or even helped to 'materially increase' communal differences; since such differences were of far greater antiquity. Of one thing, however, they were certain, that the abolition of the communal system was a step taken in the right direction; because the territorial scheme, although it might not have achieved an 'immediate metamorphosis', offered greater prospects for the solution to the communal problem than its alternative - communal representa-

tion. They thus repudiated any 'proposal caluclated to reinforce the communal basis of election' since such representation 'though superficially an attractive solution of racial differences and to some extentthe line of least resistance, will be fatal to the emergence of that unquestioning sense of nationhood' which is ultimately essential to the solution of the problems of the minorities themselves.[17]

But what of the committee system? In the election of Ministers by the Executive Committees, immediately after the general election of 1931, the hopes of the Commissioners were fulfilled. The Board of Ministers turned out to be composite: of the 7 Ministers 5 were Sinhalese and the other 2 were from the minorities - one Muslim and one Indian. But this hope was short-lived. The situation was to be changed, in 1936, with the election of the much-discussed Pan-Sinhalese Ministry. In that year, the election of Ministers was so arranged and controlled by the Sinhalese majority that all the seven were Sinhalese. Their desire for unity in the Board of Ministers, to press for further reforms of the constitution, was said to have been the main reason for this Sinhalese attitude. This action was, indeed, a great setback for the Donoughmore Commission's hopes for communal harmony through the committee system; and the Sinhalese politicians lost a great opportunity to demonstrate to the minorities that they were safe in the majority's hands. The Soulbury Commission which described this action as 'ill-advised' and as showing a 'singular lack of statesmanship', considered its implications:

> 'as a result of the creation of the Pan-Sinhalese Ministry, the minorities had grown still more alarmed, and it had become more difficult than ever to reach a measure of agreement on constitutional reform of the State Council and in the country as a whole'.[18]

But what of the criticisms that the committee system would not encourage and probably might even discourage, the growth of healthy parties? If one were to judge by the actual workings of the committees, and by the absence of actual parties during this period, the critics could be said to be right. But that the committee system together with the other aspects of the whole Donoughmore scheme were leading the way towards the growth of parties, no

one could deny. But this aspect will be dealt with later.

What remains to be seen is the impact of the introduction of universal franchise on the minority situation. Universal franchise was bound to, and, as we have observed, indeed did, place the majority in an unassailable position. This was not unforeseen by the Commissioners. They had only hoped that with the growth of parties greater political understanding and, particularly, by majority generosity, minority fears would disappear. Parties, of course, had not appeared in the first post-Donoughmore years. But were there at least greater political understanding and majority generosity as the Commissioners had hoped? These aspects too could be safely judged from the Soulbury assessment. The minorities who closely scrutinised majority actions and attitudes made a host of allegations of discrimination against it. The Soulbury Commissioners considered that, with the exception of a few instances of questionable legislation, the majority record in legislative and administrative detail was basically just and fair to the minorities. The exception was particularly in the Buddhist Temporalities Ordinance of 1931. The Ordinance provided that all the revenue and expenditure of Buddhist Temples should be supervised and examined by the Public Trustee, who was to recover the cost of this administration from the property of the Temples. By 1933 only a negligible sum had been obtained by way of contributions and in that year their recovery was suspended by Order. Meanwhile, the Public Trustee continued to carry on the administration of the Buddhist Temporalities at the public expense. The Tamils complained that a total loss of nearly half a million rupees during the period 1931 to 1943 had been incurred by the public revenue and that, from year to year, the general taxpayer is being compelled to pay for the administration of the Temporalities of a section of the population; they considered this to amount to discrimination in favour of Buddhism, the religion of the majority of the Sinhalese. The Soulbury Commission considered that '<u>prima facie</u> this contention seems to us to be correct and to afford evidence against the Sinhal-

ese majority in the Council of partiality'.[19] But the Commissioners' summing up of the question indicated the complexity of the problem; they noted

> 'a careful review of the evidence submitted to us provides no substantial indication of a general policy on the part of the Government of Ceylon of discrimination against minority communities. But when a minority, rightly or wrongly, feels itself to be for ever debarred from obtaining an adequate share of the responsibilities of government, it becomes particularly apprehensive of the actions of what it regards as a permanent and unassailable majority'.[20]

In other words, generally speaking, the majority had not failed in the test of responsibility, although extrinsic reasons, such as the prospect of approaching self-government, did not help to mitigate the anxieties and tensions of the minorities; or that given the divisions of the country and the parliamentary system in which they had to operate, minority tensions would remain.

Meanwhile, indirectly, if not directly, the Donoughmore Scheme was beginning to bear the fruits of its optimism by tending to defuse the communal situation by shifting emphasis on economic development. The thirties witnessed a growing demand from the masses for greater governmental involvement in economic and social welfare. Greater responsibility in the hands of the Ceylonese Ministers had evidently prompted this mood. A number of young Marxist, mainly Trotskyite, politicians, less communally-oriented, began to mobilise this mood. In fact, these politicians assembled under the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (L.S.S.P.) in 1935. Sensing the mood of the country, even the communal politicians, inside and outside the Council, were beginning to stress problems of development. Indeed, the undoubted economic development and social amelioration achieved during this period could be attributed to this change of emphasis. To describe this significant development in the sphere of Ceylon's politics, one could do not better than quote the words of the Soulbury Report:

> 'already we discern unmistakable signs of a change in the attitude of the electorate, brought about partly by universal suffrage and the resultant attention demanded from and paid by candidates to the social needs of their constituents, partly by the great increase of powers of self-government under the 1931 Constitution, and partly by the dissemination of a world-wide urge to provide a better standard of living for the poor and distressed. There are definite indications of the growth of a Left-Wing movement more disposed to concentrate on social and economic than on communal issues.'[21]

These developments promised the growth of healthy political parties and offered

hopes of an abatement of minority tensions in Ceylon.

NOTES

1. In the well-known 'August Declaration' of August 1917, the British Government announced the goal of British policy in India as 'the increasing association and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire'.
2. Montagu and Chelmsford were substantially of the same mind as Donoughmore and his colleagues, see Indian Reforms Report, Cmd. 9109.
3. Lord Donoughmore during evidence of the Ceylon Association in London, D.C.O.S., Vol. IV, p.305.
4. K. Balasingham, evidence before the D.Commission, D.C.O.S., Vol.IV,pp.245-46.
5. Sir Marcus Fernando, evidence before the Donoughmore Commission, D.C.O.S. Vol.II, p.208.
6. The Times of Ceylon was European owned and European-oriented; The Ceylon Independent, which by 1927 was virtually owned by Sir Marcus Fernando (a Karawa-Christian), turned deeply anti-Congress during the sessions of the Donoughmore Commission.
7. C.I., 7 October 1927, the article entitled 'Democracy and Communalism' was by the newpaper's political commentator 'Alpha'.
8. C.I., 26 July 1928.
9. N.M. Vanniya Singhe to the D.Commission - letter written by him in the Ceylon Indian, 15 January 1928 - in D.C.W.S., Vol. VII.
10. Dr. Shiels to M.T. Akbar during the latter's secret evidence on 6 January 1928, Nathan Papers.
11. The Commissioners were obviously tormented by doubts about the British parliamentary model mainly because of what they described as the increasing 'subordination of the House of Commons to the Cabinet' and the 'gradual obliteration' of the 'individuality' of the individual members of the Legislature.
12. The Round Table, 'The Ceylon Report', March 1929, pp. 295-323.
13. Sir S. Wilson, report on his visit to Ceylon, C.O. 54, 916.
14. Memorandum of E.W. Perera, T.B. Jayah and W. Duraiswamy to the Secretary of State for the Colonies (Lord Passfield), 21 December 1929, C.O.54, 900; cited Ceylon Daily News, 2 December 1929.
15. The Times, 1 March 1930; see also B.H. Bourdillon, Colonial Secretary, to the Governor, 29 December 1929, C.O. 54,900.
16. The Commission was appointed in July 1944 to 'visit Ceylon in order to examine and discuss any proposals for constitutional reform in the Island which have the object of giving effect to the Declaration of His Majesty's Government on that subject dated 26 May 1943; and, after consultation with various interests in the Island, including minority communities, concerned with the subject of constitutional reform, to advise His Majesty's Government on all measures necessary to attain that object'. The personnel was: Lord Soulbury, J.F. Rees and F.J. Burrows. Their Report - Ceylon: Report of the Commission on Constitutional Reform, Cmd.6677 - was published in July 1945.
17. The Soulbury Report, pp.66-75.
18. Op. cit., p. 19.
19. Op. cit., pp. 41-42.
20. Op. cit., p. 50.
21. Op. cit., p. 72.

APPENDIX I

Abbreviations used in Footnotes

C.D.N.	Ceylon Daily News
C.I.	Ceylon Independent
C.L.C.	Ceylon Legislative Council
C.N.C.	Ceylon National Congress
C.S.P.	Ceylon Sessional Papers
D.C.O.S.	Donoughmore Commission Oral Submissions
D.C.R.	Donoughmore Commission Report
D.C.W.S.	Donoughmore Commission Written Submissions
K.N.A.	Kandyan National Assembly

APPENDIX II

The Contemporary Castes and Subcastes in Approximate Order of Rank with Most Common English Designations.

1.	Govi-vamsa (Goyigama)	Cultivators of the soil.
	Subcastes:	
	Radala	King's office holders
	Mudali	Leaders of the people
	Patti	King's cowherds
	Katupulle	King's clerical servants
	Nilamkkara	Temple servants
	Porovkara	Wood cutters, axemen to the King
	Vahal	"Slaves", household workers to Radala
	Gattara	Goyigama "outcastes".
	Guruvo	Conch blowers
2.	Karawa	Fishermen
	Subcaste:	
	Karawa Porovakara	Unknown
3.	Salagama	Cinnamon peelers
	Subcastes:	
	Hevapanne	Soldiers
	Kurundukara	Cinnamon peelers
4.	Durava	Toddy tappers
5.	Navandanna (Acari)	Artisans, including smiths of all types
6.	Hannali	Tailors
7.	Hunu	Chunam (lime) burners
8.	Hena or Rada (Dhoby)	Washers to high castes
9.	Wahumpura (Hakuru)	Jaggory makers
10.	Hinna	Washers to Salagama
11.	Badahala	Potters
12.	Panikki	Barbers
13.	Velli-durayi	Guardians of Sacred Bo-tree.

14.	Panna-durayi	Possibly grass cutters
15.	Berava	Tom-tom beaters
16.	Batgam Berava	Tom-tom beaters
17.	Kontadurayi	Unknown
18.	Batgam (Padu)	Possibly King's palanquin bearers
19.	Oli	Dancers
20.	Pali	Washers to low castes
21.	Kinnara	Mat weavers
22.	Gahala-berava	Funeral drummers and executioners
23.	Rodi	"Outcastes", beggars.

Hierarchically unclassed

24.	Kavikara	Devale (temple) dancers and chanters
25.	Demala-Gattara	Tamil "outcastes"

(Following the list provided by Bryce Ryan (1953), pp.93-94.)

THE CASTE SYSTEM AMONG THE TAMILS OF MANNAR AND JAFFNA

1.	Brahmins	Hindu priests
2.	Vellalas	Landowners and cultivators
3.	Madapallis	Landowners and cultivators
4.	Karayars	Fishermen
5.	Chiviars	Palanquin bearers
6.	Kusavar	Potters
7.	Vannan	Washers
8.	Barbers	Barbers
9.	Kammalars	Artisans
10.	Koviars	Domestic servants of the Vellalas
11.	Thanakarars	Elephant keepers
12.	Nalavars	Liquor gatherers
13.	Pallas	Slaves of Vellalas
14.	Parayars	Drum beaters

15.	Turumbars	Washers to low castes
16.	Chandas	Unknown
17.	Chetties	Merchants
18.	Vaniyars	Oil mongers
19.	Wanniars	Unknown
20.	Kaikular	Weavers
21.	Idayars	Pastoral class
22.	Seniyan	Weavers

(Following the description of castes in H.W. Tambiah, The Laws and Customs of the Tamils of Ceylon, 1954, pp.56-61.)

MAPS
OF THE

ISLAND OF CEYLON

SHOWING

THE DISTRIBUTION OF CERTAIN RACES

scale of 64 Miles to an inch

— REFERENCE —

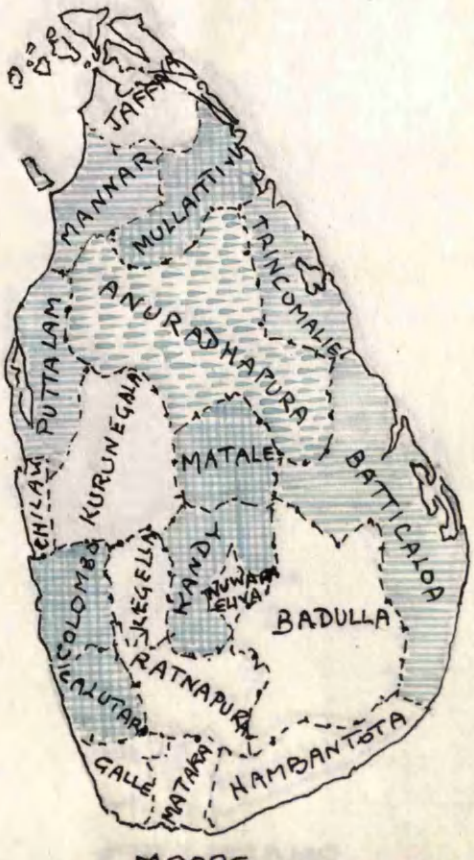
..... under... 5 p.c.
5 p.c. and "..10 "
10 "..." ..."..25 "
25 "..."..."..50 "
50 "..."..."..70 "
70 "..."..."..80 "
80 "..." over.

of the Total Population of the District.

LOW-COUNTRY SINHALESE

KANDAYAN SINHALESE

TAMILS [INC. INDIANS]

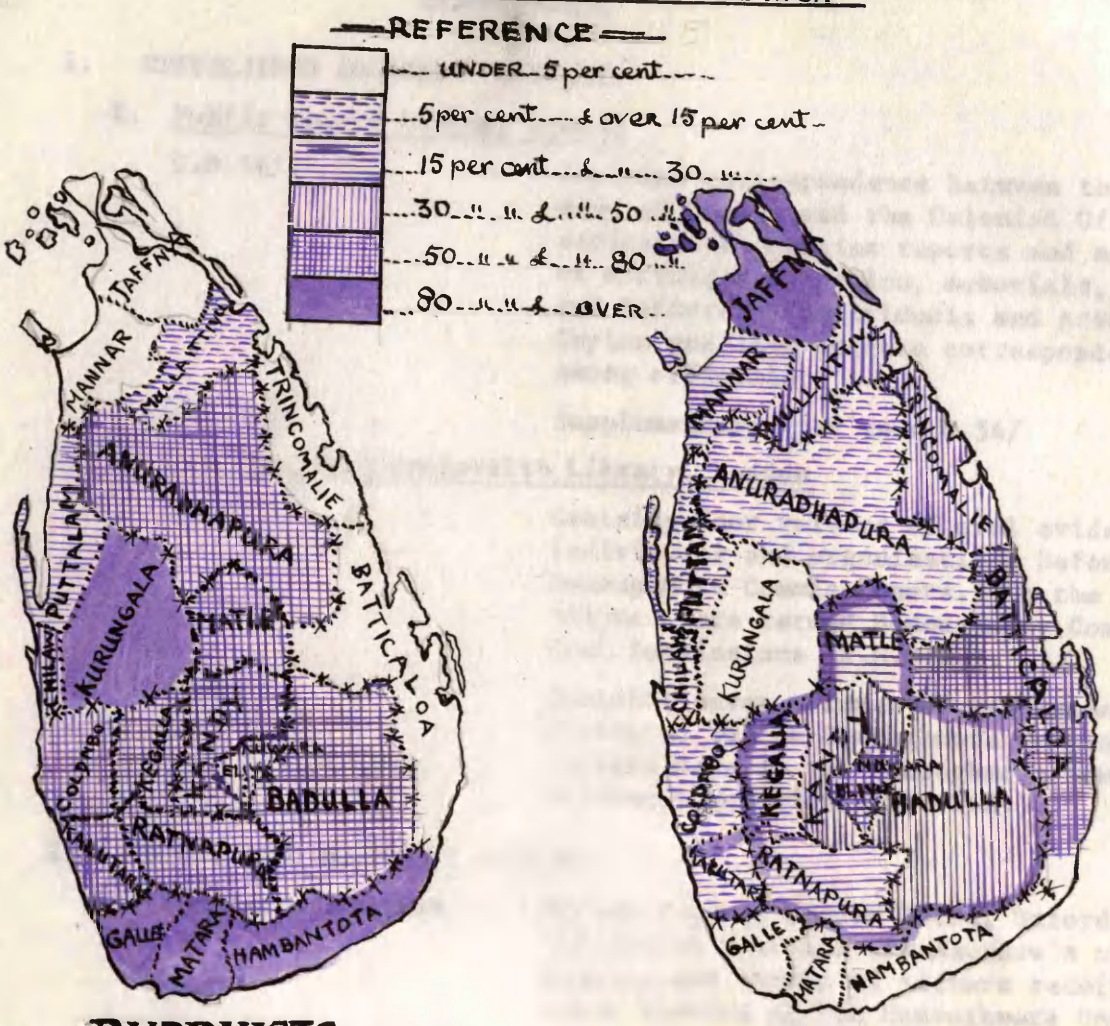


MOORS

MAPS
OF THE

ISLAND OF CEYLON

SHOWING
THE PROPORTION OF THE ADHERENTS OF
EACH OF THE FOUR PRINCIPAL RELIGIONS TO TOTAL POPULATION
IN EACH DISTRICT 1921, (MUNICIPALITIES INCLUDED IN DISTRICTS)
Scale of 64 Miles to an Inch



BUDDHISTS

HINDUS

MUHAMMADANS

CHRISTIANS

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C.O.537/	Supplementary list to C.O.54/

ii. Foreign and Commonwealth Library, London

15660	Contains four volumes of oral evidence of individuals and organisations before the Donoughmore Commissioners. In the study these volumes were termed Donoughmore Commission Oral Submissions (D.C.O.S.).
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